



AMERICAN COMICS GROUP...TOPS *in* THRILLS!



# Soldiers

No 8  
JUNE

# FORTUNE

10¢





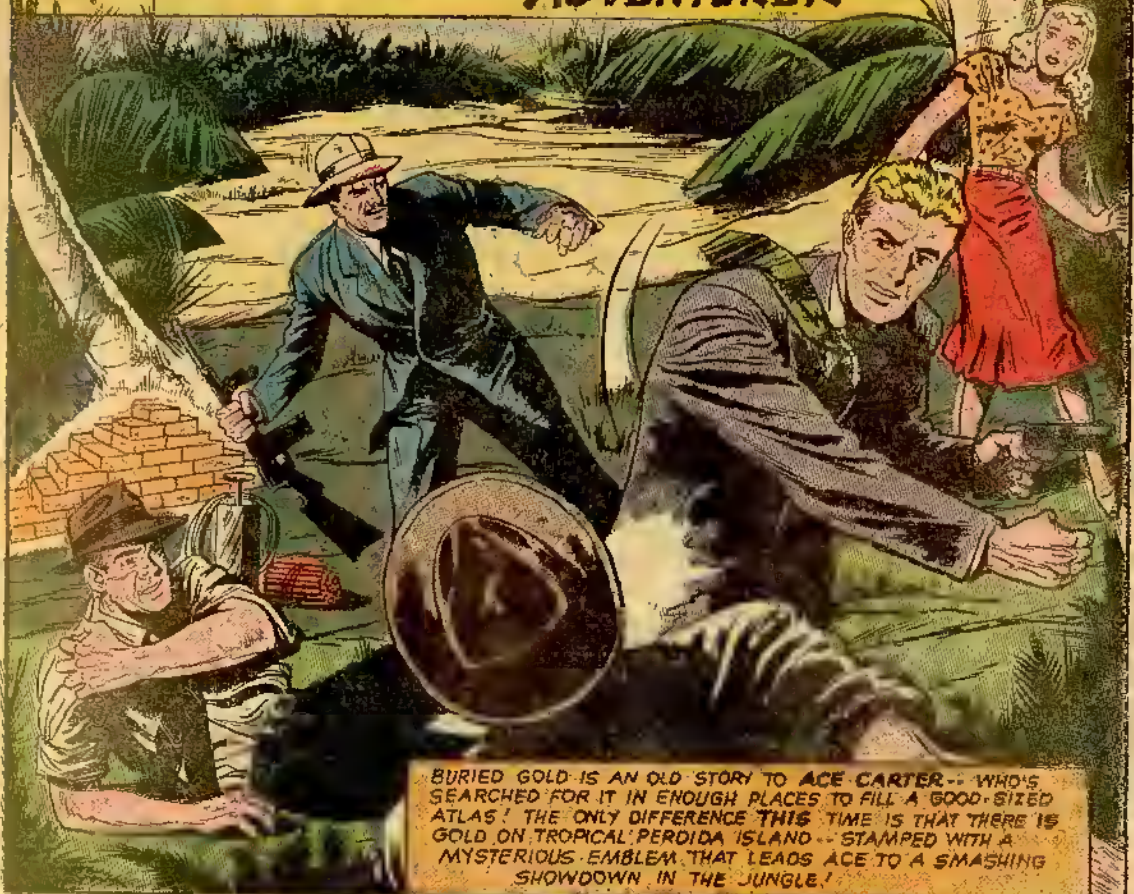


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# ACE CARTER

## ADVENTURER



BURIED GOLD IS AN OLD STORY TO ACE CARTER-- WHO'S SEARCHED FOR IT IN ENOUGH PLACES TO FILL A GOOD-SIZED ATLAS! THE ONLY DIFFERENCE THIS TIME IS THAT THERE IS GOLD ON TROPICAL PERDIDA ISLAND-- STAMPED WITH A MYSTERIOUS EMBLEM THAT LEADS ACE TO A SMASHING SHOWDOWN IN THE JUNGLE!

ONE AFTERNOON... AT THE EXPLORERS' CLUB--

MR. CARTER-- HERE'S AN ITEM THAT MIGHT INTEREST YOU!

THANKS, CHADWICK! AND IF IT'S THE USUAL HOKUM ABOUT A MISSING EXPLORER-- I'LL TAKE A GANDER AT THE BASEBALL SCORES!

"CLIFFORD ONSLOW, SPORTSMAN AND MAN ABOUT TOWN, HAS ANNOUNCED HE WILL LEAVE SHORTLY FOR PERDIDA-- THE CARIBBEAN ISLAND BELIEVED TO HOLD A FORTUNE IN SPANISH GOLD. ACCORDING TO LEGEND, THE INGOTS WERE BURIED IN 1670 BY CAPTAIN BROADSWORD, THE NOTORIOUS PIRATE!"



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MIGHT BE INTERESTING TO TEAM UP WITH ONSLOW-- BUT FIRST I WANT TO MAKE SURE THIS TREASURE CACHE ISN'T JUST ANOTHER PIPE DREAM! IT'S COMMON KNOWLEDGE THAT CAPTAIN BROADWORD SANK MANY A SHIP IN THE CARIBBEAN-- BUT MAYBE THE RECORDS AT THE PAN AMERICAN MUSEUM WILL PROVE IF HE EVER LANDED ON PERDIDA!



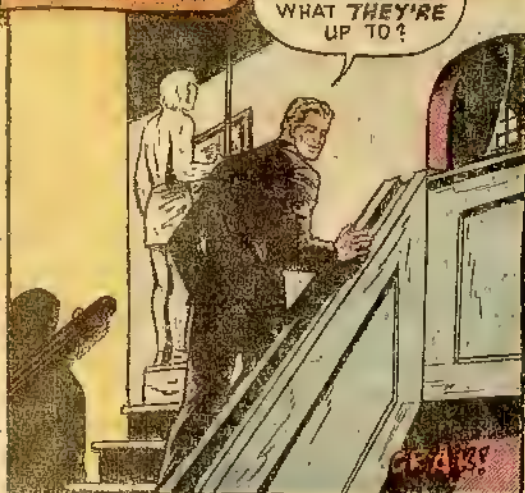
SOON AFTERWARD--

WHAT A BREAK! GUESS I'LL GO IN ANYWAY-- AND SEE IF THE CURATOR HAPPENS TO BE AROUND!



A MOMENT LATER--

WUP! WONDER WHAT THEY'RE UP TO?



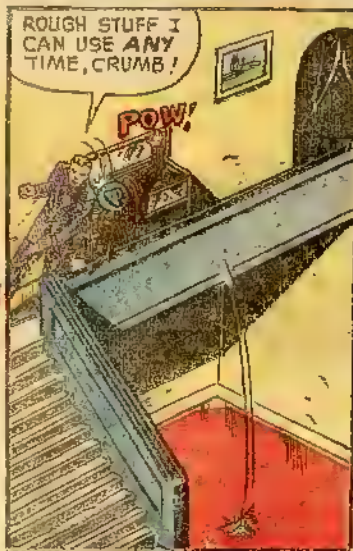
BLAZES-- AND THE BOSS PICKED TODAY FOR THIS JOB BECAUSE THERE WOULDN'T BE ANY VISITORS!

SO WHAT? A LITTLE ROUGH STUFF WILL GET RID OF HIM!



ROUGH STUFF I CAN USE ANY TIME, CRUMB!

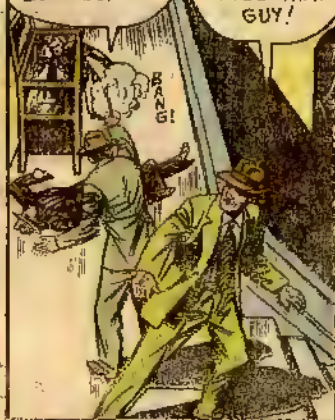
POW!



HOLY MACKEREL-- I FORGOT TO RELOAD THE CLIP-- THAT'S MY LAST BULLET!

WE CAN'T LEAVE DUKE HERE! LET'S GET HIS GUN AND PLUG THAT GUY!

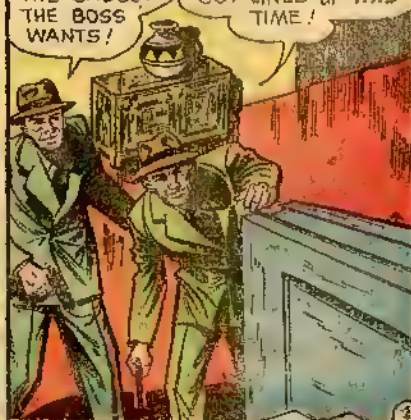
BANG!



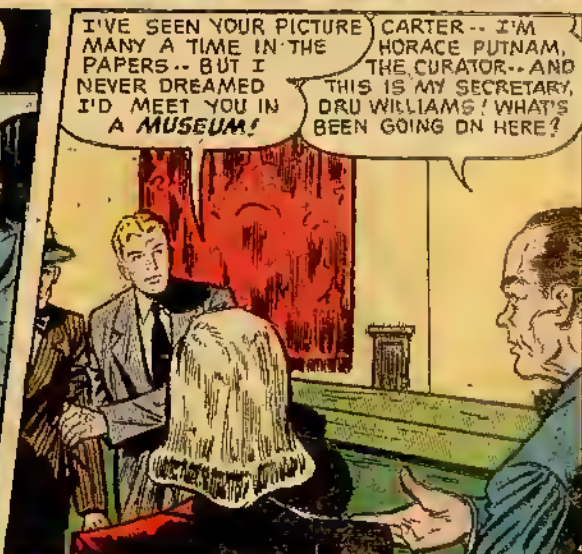
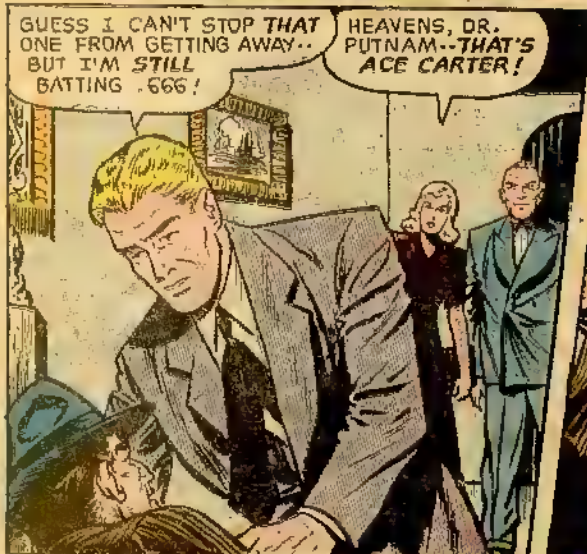
SECONDS LATER--

YEAH! ONCE WE DUST HIM OFF-- WE CAN GET THE GADGET THE BOSS WANTS!

I'VE GIVEN MANY A PALOOKA THE BUMP-- AND FOR A LOT LESS THAN THE FORTUNE WE'VE GOT LINED UP THIS TIME!







**BANG!**

A BIT PRIMITIVE, RATS--  
BUT RIGHT IN THE  
GROOVE!

AGHHH!

EDDIE--  
WATCH  
OUT!

GUESS I CAN'T STOP THAT  
ONE FROM GETTING AWAY..  
BUT I'M STILL  
BATTLING '666!

HEAVENS, DR.  
PUTNAM--THAT'S  
ACE CARTER!

I'VE SEEN YOUR PICTURE  
MANY A TIME IN THE  
PAPERS-- BUT I  
NEVER DREAMED  
I'D MEET YOU IN  
A MUSEUM!

CARTER-- I'M  
HORACE PUTNAM,  
THE CURATOR-- AND  
THIS IS MY SECRETARY,  
DRU WILLIAMS! WHAT'S  
BEEN GOING ON HERE?

I JUST HAPPENED TO  
BUST IN ON THIS RAT  
AND HIS TWO PAIS!  
GOT ANY IDEA WHY  
THEY'D WANT THIS?

THAT'S STRANGE! IT'S AN  
OLD MARKING DIE-- USED  
IN THE ROYAL MINT IN  
MEXICO CITY  
CENTURIES AGO!

AS YOU CAN SEE-- IT BEARS THE SEAL OF  
THE KING OF SPAIN! TONS OF GOLD AND SILVER  
WERE MINED IN THE NEW WORLD, CARTER--  
AND EVERY BAR WAS STAMPED WITH DIES  
LIKE THIS ONE BEFORE BEING SHIPPED  
TO SPAIN!



THEY MUST HAVE  
NEEDED **PLENTY**  
OF THESE THINGS  
TO STAMP  
THOUSANDS  
OF INGOTS,  
DR. PUTNAM!

YOU'RE RIGHT! IN FACT, WE  
HAVE SEVERAL **OTHERS** IN  
OUR VAULT-- PERHAPS YOU'D  
LIKE TO KEEP **THIS** ONE  
AS A SOUVENIR!

SUDDENLY--

HEAVENS!  
WATCH HIM,  
ACE!



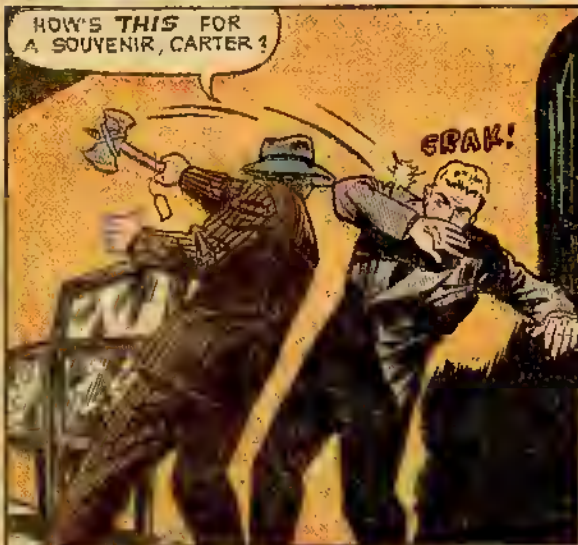
HOW'S **THIS** FOR  
A SOUVENIR, CARTER?

GRAB!

BY THE TIME ACE'S HEAD CLEARS--

I SURE MUFFED THINGS!  
THERE'S JUST ONE MORE  
RAT ON THE PREMISES--  
AND **HE'S DEAD!**

IT'S CERTAINLY  
STRANGE! WE'VE  
GOT A FORTUNE IN  
ANTIQUE GEMS  
HERE-- WHY WOULD  
THREE GUNMEN TRY TO  
GRAB AN OLD IRON  
STAMPING DIE?



SPEAKING OF  
FORTUNES,  
DR. PUTNAM--  
WHAT WOULD  
YOU SAY  
ABOUT THE  
POSSIBILITY  
OF **BURIED  
PIRATE  
GOLD**  
ON PERDIOA  
ISLAND?

CAPTAIN BROAD-  
SWORD UNDOUBTED-  
LY **DID** HIDE SOME  
OF HIS LOOT THERE,  
CARTER-- BUT SINCE  
THE ISLAND'S A  
MASS OF JUNGLE--  
I DOUBT WHETHER  
IT'LL EVER BE  
FOUND!

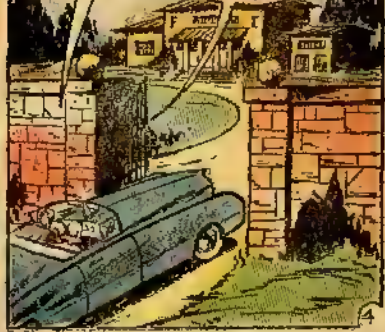
COULD BE THAT ONSLOW'S  
GOT HOLD OF AN OLD MAP!  
I'VE BEEN THINKING OF  
TALKING OVER THAT  
EXPEDITION HE'S GOT  
LINED UP-- HOW'D  
YOU LIKE TO DRIVE  
OUT WITH ME,  
DRU?

THAT'LL  
BE SOME  
THING--  
MEETING  
YOU AND  
CLIFFORD  
ONSLOW  
ON THE  
SAME  
DAY!

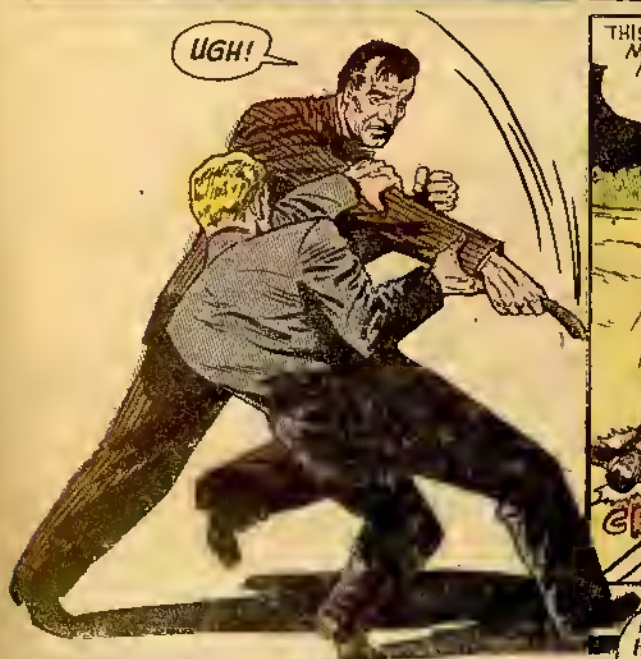
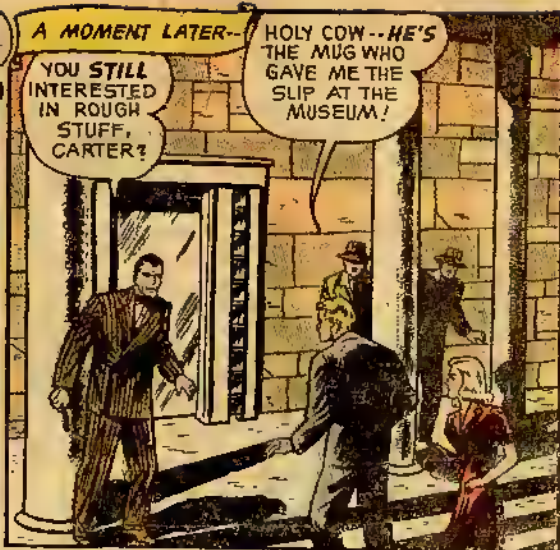
AN HOUR LATER--

WOW! IMAGINE  
ONSLOW GOING  
AFTER **TREASURE**--  
WHEN HE'S GOT  
ENOUGH JACK  
TO OWN A PLACE  
LIKE **THIS!**  
WHAT'D HE DO--  
**INHERIT** IT?

PROBABLY!  
I DON'T  
SEE HOW A  
PLAYBOY  
COULD GET  
RICH ANY  
**OTHER**  
WAY!











AS THE GANG DRIVES OFF --

I'M CLIFFORD ONSLOW! YE GODS-- DON'T TELL ME THOSE THUGS GAVE YOUR BOY FRIEND A GOING-OVER TOO?

THEY NEARLY **KILLED** HIM! WHO ARE THEY?



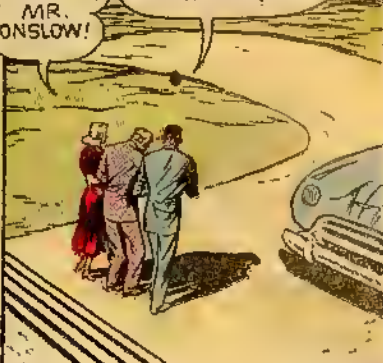
I HAVEN'T THE FAINTEST IDEA! THEY BAROED INTO MY PLACE WITH DRAWN GUNS-- PUSHED ME AROUND-- AND RANSACKED MY DESK UNTIL THEY SAW YOUR CAR PULL UP!

MAYBE THEY THOUGHT YOU HAD ONE OF THOSE OLD INGOT DIES-- BECAUSE **THAT'S** WHAT THEY GOT FROM ACE-- AFTER TRYING TO **STEAL** ONE FROM THE PAN AMERICAN MUSEUM!



POOP ACE! HE WAS HOPING TO JOIN YOUR EXPEDITION TO PERDIDA, MR. ONSLOW!

THAT'S A TOUGH BREAK FOR ME-- BECAUSE ESPECIALLY AFTER **THIS** INCIDENT-- HE'D BE A GOOD MAN TO HAVE AROUND! BUT WE'RE LEAVING TONIGHT-- AND I'M AFRAID CARTER IS IN NO SHAPE TO TRAVEL!



TWO DAYS LATER-- AT ACE'S HOTEL --

HOPE YOU DON'T MIND MY DROPPING AROUND, ACE-- BUT I JUST **HAD** TO SEE HOW YOU ARE!

MATTER OF FACT-- I WAS HOPING YOU'D SHOW UP! I WAS PRETTY ROCKY UNTIL THIS MORNING-- BUT **NOW** I'M READY TO FLY TO PERDIDA! I'VE BEEN ITCHING FOR ANOTHER CRACK AT THOSE MUGS-- AND I'M PRETTY SURE I'LL FIND THEM THERE-- **WITH ONSLOW!**

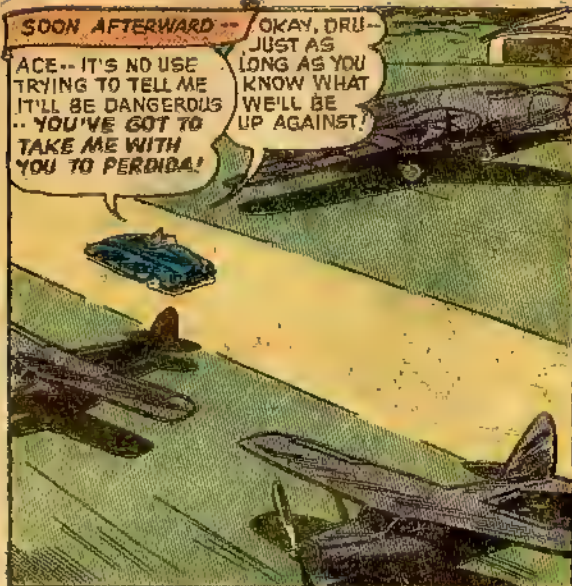


**CLIFFORD ONSLOW!** ACE-- YOU CAN'T BE SERIOUS!

FIGURE IT OUT! AFTER THE THUGS FAILED TO GET THE DIE AT THE MUSEUM-- WOULDN'T THEIR **NEXT** STEP BE TO REPORT TO THE MAN WHO SENT THEM? THAT BEING THE CASE, HOW COME THEY **BOTH** TURNED UP AT ONSLOW'S-- UNLESS **HE'S** THE MAN? BESIDES, THAT FIGHT OUTSIDE HIS HOUSE TOOK A GOOD FIVE MINUTES-- **HOW COME HE DIDN'T CALL THE POLICE?**

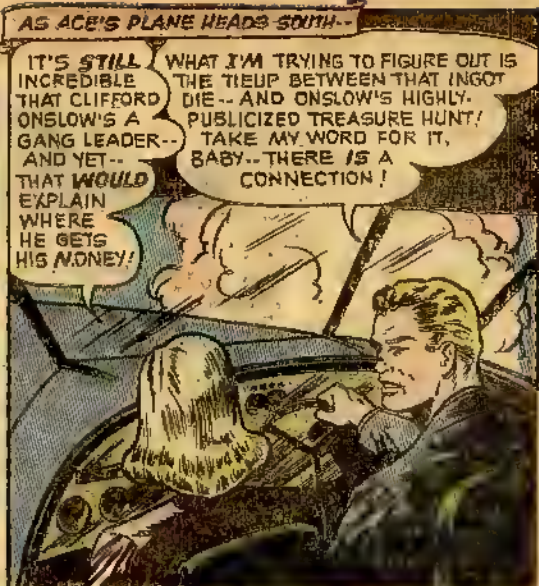






SOON AFTERWARD -- OKAY, DRU--  
JUST AS LONG AS YOU  
KNOW WHAT WE'LL BE  
UP AGAINST!

ACE-- IT'S NO USE  
TRYING TO TELL ME  
IT'LL BE DANGEROUS  
-- YOU'VE GOT TO  
TAKE ME WITH  
YOU TO PERDIDA!

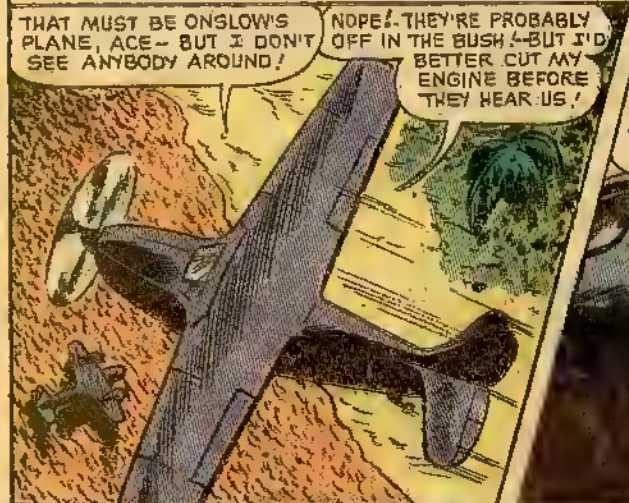


AS ACE'S PLANE HEADS SOUTH--

IT'S STILL INCREDIBLE  
THAT CLIFFORD  
ONSLOW'S A  
GANG LEADER--  
AND YET--  
THAT WOULD  
EXPLAIN  
WHERE  
HE GETS  
HIS MONEY!

WHAT I'M TRYING TO FIGURE OUT IS  
THE TIEUP BETWEEN THAT INGOT  
DIE-- AND ONSLOW'S HIGHLY  
PUBLICIZED TREASURE HUNT!  
TAKE MY WORD FOR IT,  
BABY-- THERE IS A  
CONNECTION!

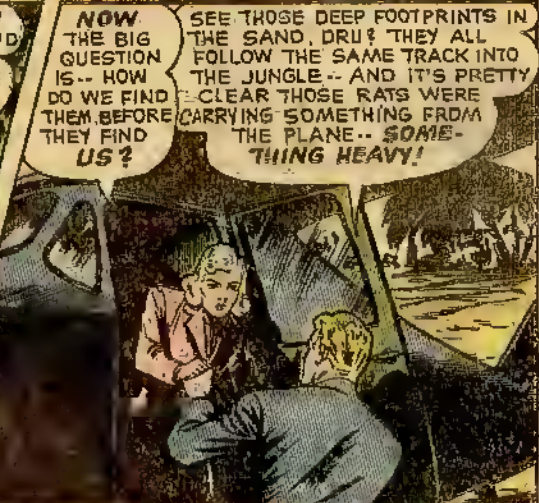
HOURS LATER-- OVER THE MATTED WILDERNESS OF PERDIDA--



THAT MUST BE ONSLOW'S  
PLANE, ACE-- BUT I DON'T  
SEE ANYBODY AROUND!

NOPE! THEY'RE PROBABLY  
OFF IN THE BUSH-- BUT I'D  
BETTER CUT MY  
ENGINE BEFORE  
THEY HEAR US!

AFTER A DEAD STICK LANDING--



NOW  
THE BIG  
QUESTION  
IS-- HOW  
DO WE FIND  
THEM BEFORE  
THEY FIND  
US?

SEE THOSE DEEP FOOTPRINTS IN  
THE SAND, DRU? THEY ALL  
FOLLOW THE SAME TRACK INTO  
THE JUNGLE-- AND IT'S PRETTY  
CLEAR THOSE RATS WERE  
CARRYING SOMETHING FROM  
THE PLANE-- SOMETHING  
HEAVY!

A FEW HUNDRED YARDS BEYOND--

THIS GETS MORE MYSTERIOUS  
EVERY MINUTE, ACE! YOU  
MEAN THEY ACTUALLY  
CARRIED  
SOMETHING  
TO PERDIDA  
IN THE  
PLANE?

NOW  
WE'RE  
GETTING  
SOMEWHERE  
WITH THIS  
HOT GOLD  
FROM  
THAT BIG  
BANK  
HAUL.  
ONSLOW!

UP TO NOW, THOSE INGOTS  
WERE ABOUT AS USEFUL AS  
A LOAD OF CEMENT-- STOLEN  
GOLD'S EASY TO TRACE! BUT  
NOW ALL WE'VE GOT TO DO  
IS BLAST A HOLE-- CLAIM  
WE FOUND BROADSWORD'S  
TREASURE-- AND SELL  
THE GOLD IN EUROPE  
FOR 50% MORE THAN  
IT'S WORTH IN  
THE STATES!

SUDDENLY--

ACE CARTER!  
ONSLOW-- DUKE--  
GET OVER  
HERE!

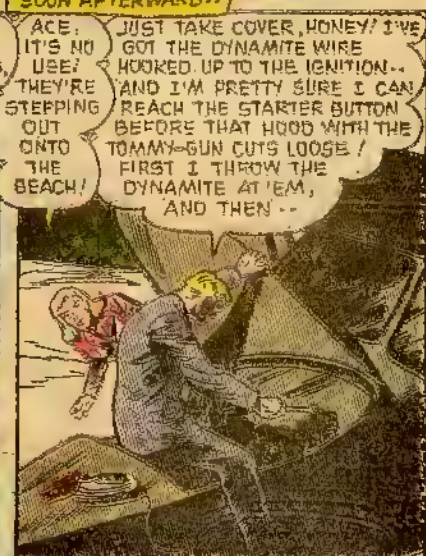
BETTER  
DUCK,  
DRU!







SOON AFTERWARD --

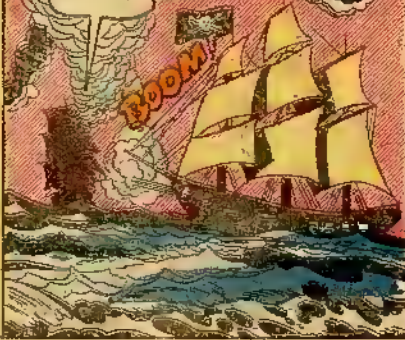




# PIRATES against AMERICA

ALL THROUGH THE 18<sup>TH</sup> CENTURY, A RUTHLESS BAND OF PIRATES PREYED ON COMMERCIAL SHIPPING OFF THE BARBARY COAST OF AFRICA, CAPTURING ENORMOUS AMOUNTS OF BOOTY AND TURNING ALL PRISONERS INTO SLAVES!

IT'S THE BARBARY PIRATES-- WE'D BETTER SURRENDER BEFORE WE'RE BLOWN TO BITS!

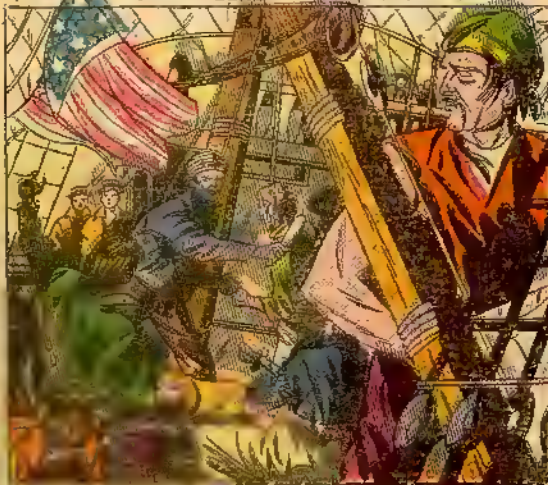


BUT PUBLIC OPINION IN AMERICA SOON PUT A STOP TO SUCH TRIBUTE-- AND CONGRESS ORDERED A FLEET TO BE CONSTRUCTED AT ONCE TO DEFEAT AMERICAN SHIPS AGAINST THE CORSAIRS!

MILLIONS FOR DEFENSE-- BUT NOT ONE CENT FOR TRIBUTE!



BUT THE PIRATES HAD ENDLESS REINFORCEMENTS FROM SHORE-- AND WERE THUS ABLE TO OVERWHELM THE OUTNUMBERED AMERICAN CREWMEN!



THE COUNTRIES OF EUROPE WERE FORCED TO PAY HUGE TRIBUTES TO THE YUSUF OF TRIPOLI, WHO CONTROLLED THE PIRATES, IN RETURN FOR GUARANTEES THAT THEIR SHIPS WOULD NOT BE MOLESTED! AND IN 1799, THE YOUNG AMERICAN NATION WAS FORCED TO KNUCKLE UNDER TO THE YUSUF BECAUSE IT NEEDED TRADE SO BADLY!

THE AMERICAN GOVERNMENT, IN PAYMENT FOR A GUARANTEE OF IMMUNITY TO ITS COMMERCIAL VESSELS, WILL DELIVER THE SUM OF \$50,000, 25 GUNS, 10,000 CANNON BALLS, IN ADDITION TO QUANTITIES OF POWDER, CORDAGE, AND JEWELS!



IN ANSWER, THE YUSUF OF TRIPOLI DECLARED WAR ON MAY 14<sup>TH</sup>, 1801, BY CHOPPING DOWN THE FLAGSTAFF OF THE AMERICAN CONSULATE! THE YOUNG AMERICAN REPUBLIC THEN SENT ITS NEWEST 36-GUN WARSHIP, THE "PHILADELPHIA," TO BLOCKADE THE PORT OF TRIPOLI-- BUT DISASTER OVERTOOK THE VESSEL!

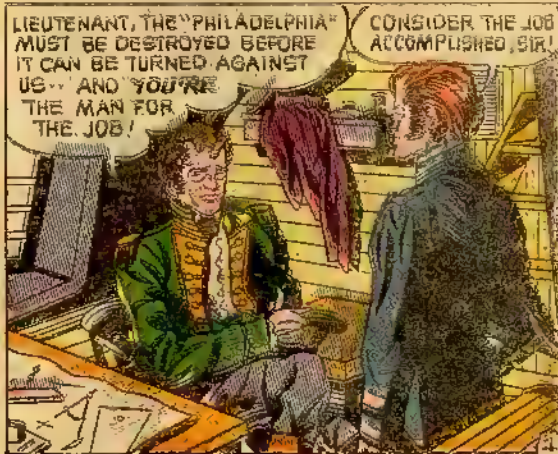
WE'VE RUN AGROUND-- AND HERE COME THE PIRATES! MAN YOUR BATTLE POSTS!



AS SOON AS COMMODORE EDWARD FREBLE, ABOARD THE "VIXEN," HEARD THE NEWS OF THE CATASTROPHE, HE CALLED UPON ONE OF HIS MOST DARING AND BRILLIANT YOUNG LIEUTENANTS, STEPHAN DECATUR!

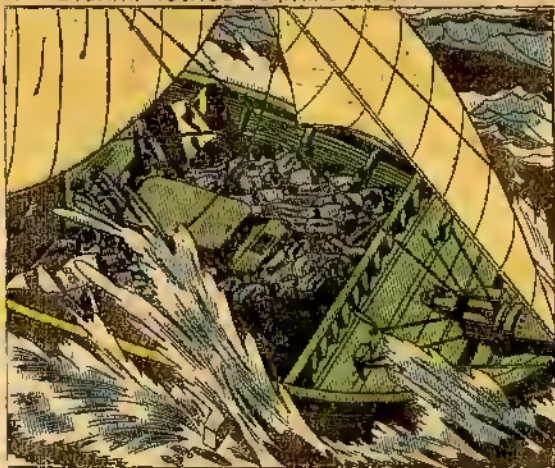
LIEUTENANT, THE "PHILADELPHIA" MUST BE DESTROYED BEFORE IT CAN BE TURNED AGAINST US-- AND YOU'RE THE MAN FOR THE JOB!

CONSIDER THE JOB ACCOMPLISHED, SIR!





LT. DECATUR WAS PUT IN COMMAND OF A SMALL KETCH, THE "INTREPID"-- AND 15 MEN WERE PACKED LIKE SARDINES ON DECK ALL THROUGH A WILD AND STORMY VOYAGE TO TRIPOLI!



FINALLY, ONE DARK AND MOONLESS NIGHT, THE "INTREPID" LIVED UP TO ITS NAME AS IT SAILED BOLDLY INTO THE MOORISH HARBOR AND MADE STRAIGHT FOR THE CAPTURED "PHILADELPHIA"! ONLY A FEW OF THE CREW, DISGUISED AS MALTESE SAILORS, WERE ON DECK-- AND WHEN THEY WERE CHALLENGED BY A MOORISH LOOKOUT, THE KETCH'S ARABIAN PILOT CALLED OUT--

WE HAVE LOST OUR ANCHOR IN A GALE-- WE WISH TO RUN A LINE TO YOUR SHIP SO WE MAY RIDE ALONGSIDE YOU DURING THE NIGHT!

WE CANNOT REFUSE OUR MOSLEM BROTHERN SUCH A SIMPLE FAVOR-- THROW US YOUR LINES!



THE PIRATES WERE COMPLETELY TAKEN IN-- UNTIL IT WAS TOO LATE!

SO SUDDEN AND FIERCE WAS THE YANKEE ASSAULT THAT IN TEN MINUTES THE PIRATES WERE SUBDUED WITH SCARCELY AN AMERICAN CASUALTY!



AFTER SETTING THE "PHILADELPHIA" ABLAZE, THE AMERICANS PILED BACK ON BOARD THE KETCH AND FLEO FROM THE HARBOR-- WHILE CANNON BALLS FROM THE MOORISH FORT AND THE "PHILADELPHIA'S" EXPLODING GUNS FELL ALL AROUND THEM!



FINALLY, IN JULY OF 1804, COMMODORE PREBLE LAUNCHED FIVE ATTACKS AGAINST TRIPOLI-- UNTIL THE PIRATES FLEO OR SURRENDERED!

IN JUNE 1805, THE MOORS WERE FORCED TO SIGN A TREATY WHICH FOREVER ENDED THE MARAUDING OF THE BARBARY PIRATES!



THE END



# LANCE LARSON

## SOLDIER of FORTUNE



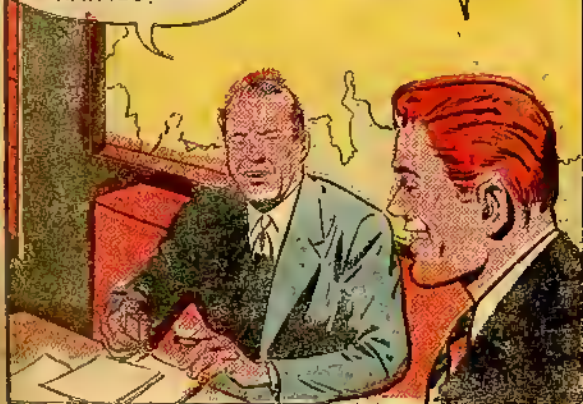
"YUP, THAT'S ME, LANCE LARSON-- WITH MY ARMS FULL OF WOMEN AND TROUBLE AGAIN! BUT THAT'S ALL A SOLDIER OF FORTUNE LIKE ME ASKS FOR-- A CHANCE FOR ROMANCE-- AND A SPINE-JARRING, DEADLY BATTLE AGAINST TREMENDOUS ODDS!"

HEADQUARTERS, U.S. MILITARY INTELLIGENCE--"

I'VE GOT A JOB THAT OUGHT TO BE RIGHT UP THE ALLEY OF A ONE-MAN-ARMY LIKE YOU, LANCE! YOU-- AGAINST A COUPLE OF HUNDRED FANATICAL NAZIS AND A COUPLE OF MILLION WARLIKE BERBER NATIVES!

WHY PICK ON ME, GENERAL? I'M NOT A SOLDIER-- ONLY A SOLDIER OF FORTUNE-- AND THERE'S A BIG DIFFERENCE BETWEEN THE TWO!

THERE'S A FORTUNE INVOLVED IN THIS JOB TOO! ALLIED INTELLIGENCE HAS KNOWN FOR YEARS THAT FANATICAL NAZI SS TROOPS LED BY THE ARCH WAR-CRIMINAL, GEN. KURT WIEGAND, ESCAPED WITH MILLIONS IN LOOT JUST BEFORE THE END OF THE WAR! THEY FLEO TO THE ATLAS MOUNTAINS OF NORTH AFRICA, WHERE IT WAS A PHYSICAL IMPOSSIBILITY TO FIND THEM!



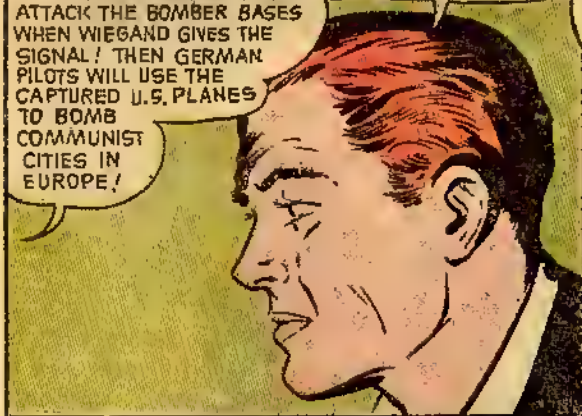


BUT NOW THAT NEW U.S. AIRBASES HAVE BEEN BUILT ALL OVER FRENCH MOROCCO, WE'VE LEARNED THAT THE NAZIS ARE HANDING OUT HUGE SUMS OF MONEY TO THE FIERCE ABORIGINAL BERBERS-- PROMISING THEM INDEPENDENCE IF THEY ATTACK THE BOMBER BASES WHEN WIEGAND GIVES THE SIGNAL! THEN GERMAN PILOTS WILL USE THE CAPTURED U.S. PLANES TO BOMB COMMUNIST CITIES IN EUROPE!

I GET IT--THEY'LL COUNT ON THE REDS TO RETALIATE AGAINST AMERICA AND TOUCH OFF A THIRD WORLD WAR!

EXACTLY-- A WAR WHICH WILL DESTROY BOTH SIDES AND ALLOW THE NAZIS TO RETURN TO POWER IN A RUINED WORLD! ONLY A ONE-MAN-ARMY AND A MASTER OF DISGUISES CAN GET TO THE NAZI MOUNTAIN STRONGHOLD AND STOP THEIR FIENDISH PLOT!

WITH SO MUCH AT STAKE--AND WITH SUCH A FORTUNE TO BE RECOVERED--HOW CAN I TURN DOWN THE JOB?



"FIVE HOURS LATER, I WAS WINGING OUT OVER THE ATLANTIC IN AN ARMY TRANSPORT PLANE, STUDYING A PHOTOGRAPH OF THE UGLY PUSS OF KHEIR EL HAFSID, MOST POWERFUL AND CRUELEST OF THE BERBER CHIEFTAINS!"

"THE NEXT NIGHT, HIGH OVER THE TOWERING ATLAS MOUNTAINS--"

WELL, I'M FAIRLY NEAR EL HAFSID'S VILLAGE-- AND I OUGHT TO LOOK ENOUGH LIKE HIM NOW TO START THINGS POPPING!

EL HAFSID IS SURE TO BE ALLIED WITH THE NAZIS-- SO DISGUIISING MYSELF AS HIM OUGHT TO GET ME SOME KIND OF A LEAD TO WIEGAND!



"AFTER BURYING MY CHUTE, I SMEARED MYSELF WITH RED OYE TO SIMULATE BLOOD! THEN, WHEN I SIGHTED SOME SHEPHERDS, I BEGAN GASPING OUT IN THE BERBER LANGUAGE, WHICH I KNEW WELL."

I HAVE BEEN AMBUSHED AND WOUNDED! TAKE ME TO MY STRONGHOLD--QUICKLY-- SO THAT I MAY SEND MY MEN AGAINST THE INFIDELS WHO DARED ATTACK KHEIR EL HAFSID!



AHMED-- IT IS EL HAFSID, THE BRUTAL ONE

FEAR NOT, MARLA-- HE IS WOUNDED-- NOW I WILL FINISH THE TYRANT WHO WISHES TO BRING WARFARE AND BLOOD-SHED TO THE BERBERS!





"I HAD NO CHOICE BUT TO ABANDON ALL PRETENSE OF BEING HURT-- AND TO FIGHT FOR MY LIFE!"



"YOU MAY WAKE UP WITH A HEADACHE, FRIEND-- BUT MAYBE NEXT TIME YOU WON'T LOSE YOUR HEAD SO QUICKLY!"



"YOU... YOU'RE SPARING HIS LIFE! I DO NOT UNDERSTAND-- EVERYONE KNOWS THAT EL HAFSID TORTURES TO DEATH ANYONE WHO LIFTS A HAND AGAINST HIM! PERHAPS THE TERRIBLE REPORTS ABOUT YOU WERE WRONG!"



"IF I'D KNOWN THAT EL HAFSID HAD **ENEMIES** AMONG THE BERBERS, I WOULDN'T HAVE COME DISGUISED AS HIM-- I'D HAVE COME AS MYSELF!"

"RED HAIR, A MASTER OF DISGUISES-- YOU... YOU COULD ONLY BE **ONE MAN-- LANCE LARSON!** THE OPPRESSED PEOPLES OF THE WORLD KNOW YOUR GLORIOUS WORK!"



"WELL, I'VE FINALLY GOTTEN AROUND TO VISITING THE BERBERS! AND NOW, MARLA-- CAN YOU TAKE ME TO EL HAFSID'S STRONGHOLD?"

"YES-- WE CAN BE THERE BY NIGHTFALL! BUT YOU HAD BETTER CHANGE YOUR DISGUISE TO THAT OF AN ORDINARY BERBER!-- BECAUSE MANY TRIBESMEN WILL KNOW THAT THE **REAL** EL HAFSID IS IN HIS TOWN!"



"TO TELL THE TRUTH, IT WASN'T EASY TO KEEP MY MIND ON BUSINESS WITH SUCH AN EXOTIC CHICK AS MARLA-- BUT SOMEHOW, I MANAGED TO DO IT!"

"YOU CAME HERE AT A CRITICAL TIME, LANCE! THE NAZIS AND FASCIST BERBER CHIEFTAINS HAVE WON OVER MANY TRIBESMEN, HANDING OUT GOLD TO THOSE WHO AGREE TO STRIKE AGAINST DEMOCRACY WHEN THE TIME IS RIFE! BUT THERE ARE STILL MANY WHO WISH PEACE, ALTHOUGH THEY DARE NOT SPEAK OUT!"

"I'M WILLING TO SPEAK OUT, BABY-- WITH MY FISTS AND GUNS!"



"AT NIGHTFALL--" THERE-- THAT IS EL HAFSID'S STRONGHOLD!

"GOOD! YOU CAN WAIT FOR ME IN THE SHAADOWS OF THE WALLS WHILE I PAY A LITTLE VISIT TO A CERTAIN PLUG-UGLY INSIDE!"





"DISGUISED ONCE MORE AS EL HAFSID, I CREPT STEALTHILY UP BEHIND THE SENTRY AT THE TOWN GATE-- AND THEN--"



"NOW TO GET INSIDE-- AND REALLY GO TO WORK!"

**GRAB!**

"FOLLOWING MARLA'S DIRECTIONS, I THREADED MY WAY THROUGH THE SINISTER ALLEYS-- AND I FINALLY REACHED THE PALATIAL HOUSE OF EL HAFSID HIMSELF!"

EL HAFSID! I... I THICK-HEADED DIDN'T SEE YOU LEAVE, SIRE-- YOU WERE ASLEEP AT YOUR POST WHEN YOU TOLD ME YOU WERE RETIRING FOR THE NIGHT! I WENT OUT TO CHECK ON THE GUARDS!



"FAMILIAR WITH THE PLAN OF THE USUAL BERBER CHIEFTAIN'S HOUSE, I MADE MY WAY UNERRINGLY TO THE MASTER BEDROOM-- BUT THERE--"



**OOPS!**

WHO'S THERE?

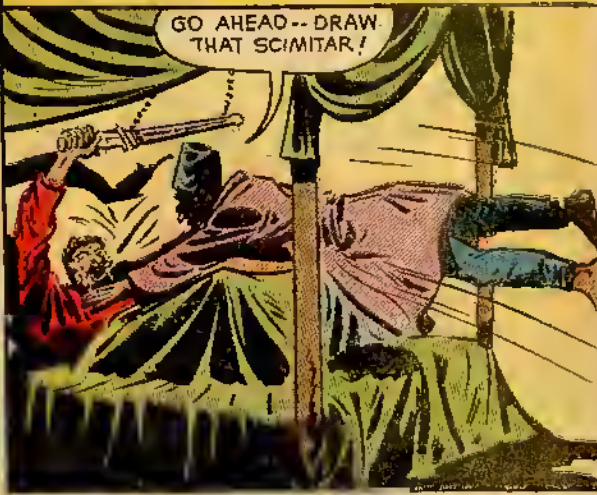
**WHAM!**

"AS A LIGHT SUDDENLY WENT ON..."

BY THE PROPHET-- YOU... YOU ARE ME!



"WITH A LEAP THAT WOULD HAVE DONE CREDIT TO AN OLYMPIC BROADJUMPER--"



GO AHEAD-- DRAW THAT SCIMITAR!

IT'S A MIGHTY HANDY GADGET FOR PIG-STICKING!

**AGHHHH!**

"WORKING SWIFTLY, I DRESSED EL HAFSID'S NIGHT GEAR, THEN TOOK OUT MY MAKEUP KIT-- AND BEGAN TRANSFORMING HIS FACE INTO THAT OF LANCE LARSON!"



AND NOW FOR THE NEXT STEP-- GUARD! GUARD!





YOU CALLED, EL HAFSID-- WHA--!

FIG-- SOMEONE ENTERED THE HOUSE WHILE YOU SLEPT-- AND THAT SOMEONE WAS LANCE LARSON, THE AMERICAN! HE TRIED TO KILL ME-- AND PAID WITH HIS LIFE! NOW YOU WILL DIE FOR YOUR NEGLIGENCE OF DUTY!



NO-- NO-- MERCY, SIRE-- I BEG OF YOU!

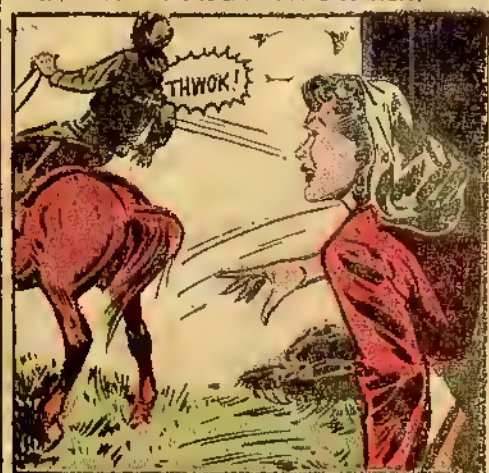
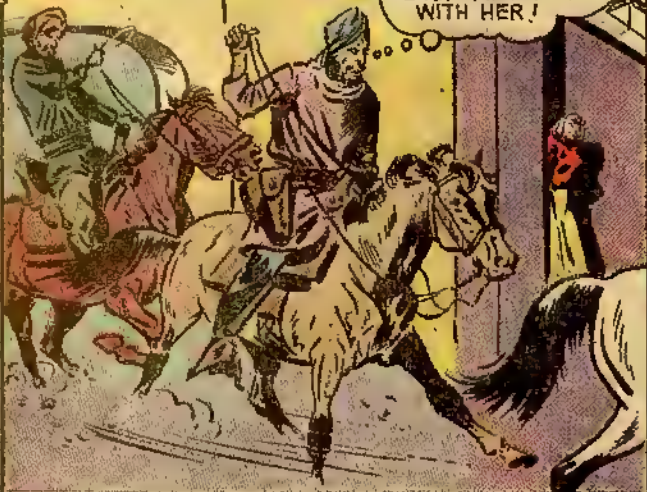
I WILL SPARE YOUR WORTHLESS LIFE-- BUT ONLY BECAUSE I NEED EVERY AVAILABLE FIGHTING MAN! BURY THE AMERICAN IMMEDIATELY-- AND THEN PREPARE A MILITARY ESCORT FOR THE TREK TO WIEGAND'S HEADQUARTERS! LARSON'S PRESENCE HERE MEANS THAT THE AMERICANS MUST KNOW ABOUT OUR PLOT AGAINST THEIR AIRBASES!



"MY ORDERS WERE SWIFTLY OBEYED-- AND AN HOUR LATER--"

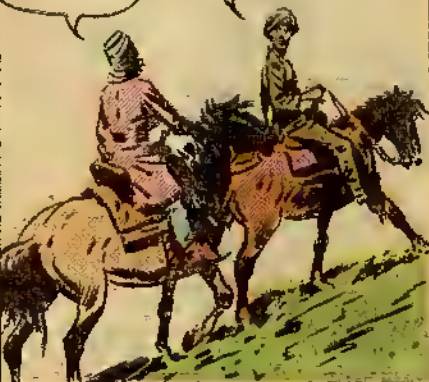
THERE'S MARLA-- BUT I DON'T DARE STOP AND TALK WITH HER!

"I RODE ON, WORRYING ABOUT MARLA-- BUT I'D HAVE BEEN EVEN MORE WORRIED IF I'D KNOWN WHAT SHE WAS DOING AS THE LAST OF MY RIDERS PASSED HER!"



SWINE-- IS THIS THE SWIFTEST ROUTE TO WIEGAND'S HEAD-QUARTERS?

WHY, CERTAINLY, SIRE-- HAVE WE NOT TRAVELED THERE WITH YOU MANY TIMES?

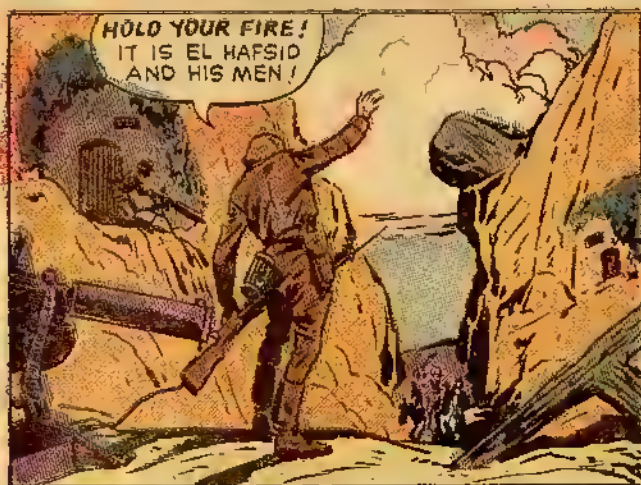


ER... YES, OF COURSE! I... I MUST STILL BE DAZED FROM THE BLOW LARSON GAVE ME BEFORE I KILLED HIM! YOU LEAD THE WAY!





"FINALLY, AS WE REACHED THE HEAVILY GUARDED MOUNTAIN PASS LEADING TO WIEGAND'S STRONGHOLD-- DEEP IN THE RUGGED WILDERNESS--"



HOLD YOUR FIRE!  
IT IS EL HAFSID  
AND HIS MEN!

GREAT SCOTT--  
CAMOUFLAGED  
PILLBOXES! NO  
WONDER AERIAL  
PHOTOGRAPHS OF  
THE REGION NEVER  
SHOWED UP  
THE CAMP!

EL HAFSID--WHAT  
ARE YOU DOING  
HERE? YOU SHOULD  
BE BUSY RECRUIT-  
ING MORE BERBERS  
FOR THE ASSAULT  
ARMY!

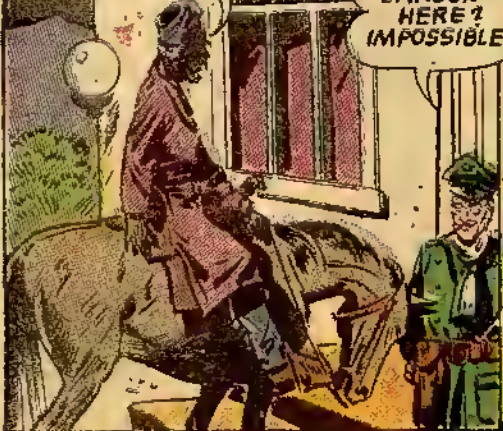


I HAD TO COME--TO TELL YOU THAT LANCE LARSON MADE AN ATTEMPT ON MY LIFE! THE AMERICANS MUST SUSPECT OUR PLOT-- WE MUST ADVANCE THE DATE FOR THE ATTACK!

LANCE LARSON--  
HERE? IMPOSSIBLE!

MY MASTER  
SPEAKS THE  
TRUTH-- I  
MYSELF  
BURIED THE RED-  
HEADED DEVIL!

HMM, THEN WE MUST STRIKE QUICKLY-- BEFORE THE AMERICANS LEARN THAT LARSON FAILED TO DISRUPT OUR PLANS AND SEND REINFORCEMENTS TO THEIR AIRBASES! EL HAFSID-- DISPATCH MESSENGERS TO ALL THE NEAREST TRIBES TO ASSEMBLE HERE IN THE MORNING FOR THE MASS ASSAULT!



"I SENT OUT HALF MY MEN AS MESSENGERS-- AND THEN JOINED WIEGAND IN HIS HEADQUARTERS--"

IN THE MORNING, WE WILL DIVIDE OUR FORCES-- ONE WILL SEIZE THE KHOURIBGA AIRBASE, WHILE THE OTHER STORMS THE BASE AT MEKNES!

A MOST EXCELLENT  
PLAN, GENERAL!

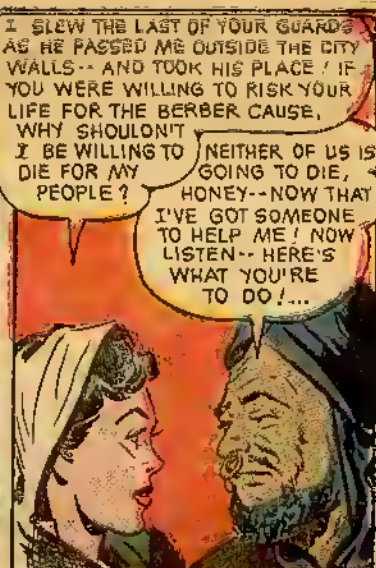


AFTER OUR VICTORY, MY PILOTS WILL USE THE CAPTURED AMERICAN PLANES AND BOMBS TO FLY OVER THE RED CAPITALS OF EUROPE AND WREAK HAVOC AND DESTRUCTION! THE COMMUNISTS WILL NEVER SUSPECT THAT AMERICANS WEREN'T FLYING THOSE PLANES, AND WILL RETALIATE! ATOMIC WAR WILL LEAVE THE WORLD IN RUINS-- AND FROM THE RUBBLE, NAZISM WILL BE REBORN-- WITH FUHRER WIEGAND AS WORLD DICTATOR!





"I KNEW HE WAS EVEN MORE POWER-MAD THAN HITLER HAD BEEN! STILL, THERE WAS METHOD IN HIS MADNESS, AND I WAS THE ONLY ONE WHO COULD PREVENT HIS INSANE DREAM FROM BECOMING A REALITY! WORRIED, I WENT OUTSIDE TO THINK-- WHEN SUDDENLY--"





"AFTER COMPLETING THE CHANGE, I SPILLED SOME RED DYE OVER THE FRONT OF THE UNIFORM I WAS WEARING--AND--"

GENERAL--  
YOU'RE  
WOUNDED!

YES-- BY EL HAFSID! THE PIG STABBED ME AND ESCAPED-- TO LEAD HIS MEN IN AN ATTACK AGAINST US! QUICKLY-- SOUND THE ALARM! ORDER ALL TROOPS TO THE PASS TO SHOOT DOWN THE BERBERS! THEN-- COME BACK HERE-- TO ATTEND TO ME!



"THE SENTRY RUSHED OFF-- AND I RUSHED BACK TO PICK UP EL HAFSID'S ROBES AND HOP OUT THE BACK WINDOW!"

GOOD GIRL-- YOU'RE  
RIGHT ON TIME WITH  
THOSE MOUNTS!

THE NAZI WHO HAD THEM  
WON'T NEED THEM ANY  
MORE-- BECAUSE  
DEAD MEN  
CAN'T RIDE  
HORSES!



"IN THE ENSUING EXCITEMENT OF THE NAZI ALARM--"

"WHILE RIDING, I COULDN'T HELP GRINNING AT THE SCENE I KNEW WAS GOING ON IN WIEGAND'S HEADQUARTERS--"

ALL TROOPS--  
TO THE PASS!  
PREPARE TO  
WIPE OUT THE  
BERBERS!

THEY'RE ALL HEADING  
THE OTHER WAY-- IT'LL  
BE EASY TO MAKE  
OUR GETAWAY AND  
CIRCLE BACK TO THE  
CLIFF OVERLOOKING  
THE PASS!

HE IS DEAD-- THE LEAST WE CAN  
DO IS FOLLOW OUT HIS LAST  
ORDERS TO WIPE OUT THE

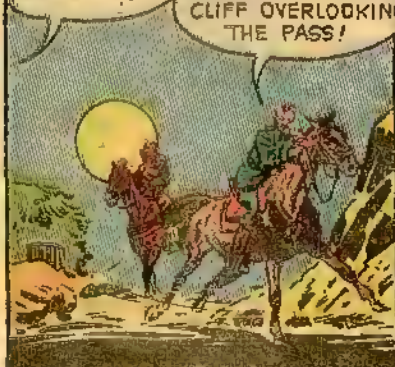
TRACHEROUS  
BERBERS!

"THEN, ON TOP OF THE CLIFF  
OVERLOOKING THE PASS--"

HA-- THE BERBERS  
ARE APPROACHING  
IN MASSES! COLUMNS!  
WAIT UNTIL THEY

ARE  
WITHIN  
POINT-  
BLANK  
RANGE--  
AND THEN  
WE WILL  
SLAUGHTER  
THEM

QUICK, MARLA  
--TRY TO FIND  
A LARGE BRANCH  
WE CAN USE  
AS A LEVER--  
WHILE I RESUME  
MY IMPERSONATION  
OF EL  
HAFSID!



"MINUTES  
LATER--"

FIRE!



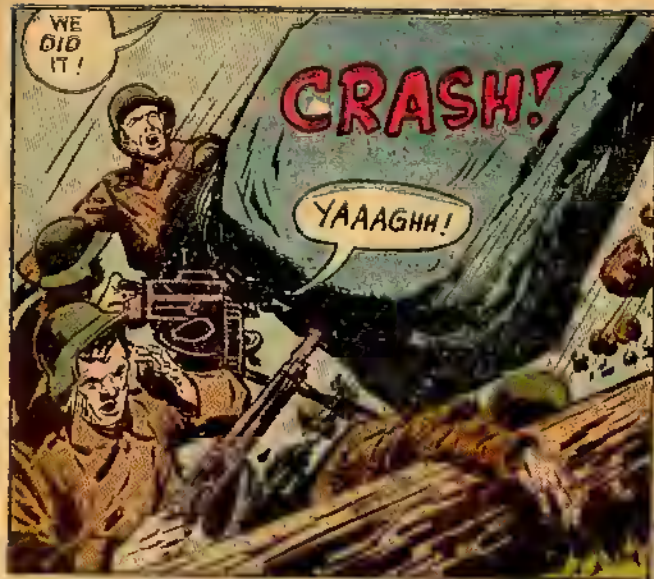
THE FOOLS ARE  
MILLING AROUND  
LIKE BEWILDERED  
SHEEP-- KEEP  
FIRING!

COME ON, MARLA-- JUST A  
LITTLE MORE-- IT'S  
BEGINNING TO MOVE!



RAT-TAT-  
TAT-TAT-  
TAT!





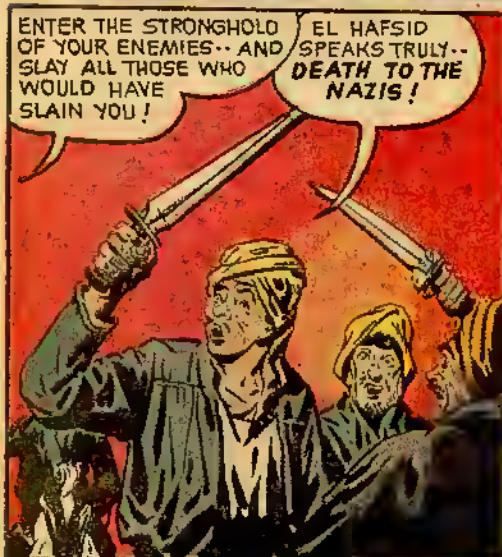
WE  
DID  
IT!

**CRASH!**

YAAAGHH!

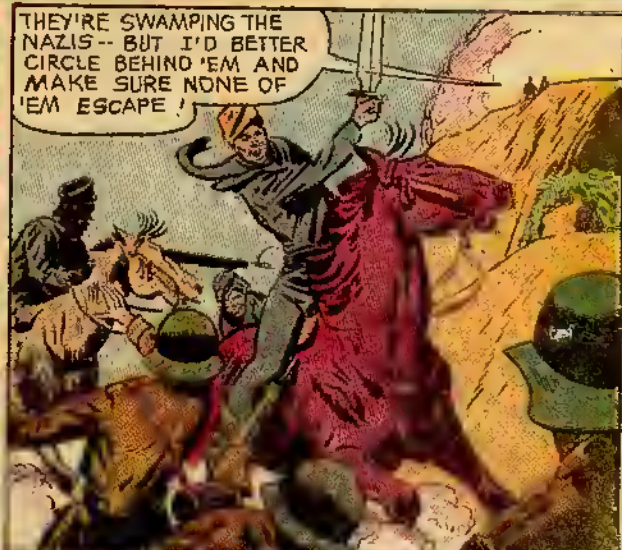


HEAR ME, O BERBERS! I, EL HAFSID, HAVE  
SAVED YOU FROM ANNIHILATION BY THE  
NAZIS! THEY WISHED TO LEAD YOU INTO A  
DEATH TRAP -- BECAUSE THEY CONSIDER  
YOU AN INFERIOR RACE!



ENTER THE STRONGHOLD  
OF YOUR ENEMIES... AND  
SLAY ALL THOSE WHO  
WOULD HAVE  
SLAIN YOU!

EL HAFSID  
SPEAKS TRULY...  
**DEATH TO THE  
NAZIS!**

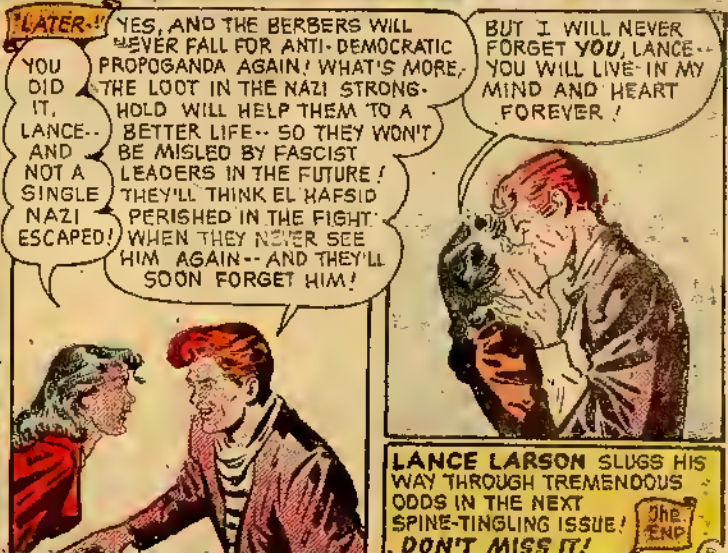


THEY'RE SWAMPING THE  
NAZIS -- BUT I'D BETTER  
CIRCLE BEHIND 'EM AND  
MAKE SURE NONE OF  
'EM ESCAPE!

"YES, I'D BEEN A MAN OF A THOUSAND  
FACES... AND NOW IT WAS TIME TO BE  
A **ONE-MAN-ARMY!** AND **THIS**  
WAS THE PART I GOT THE BIGGEST  
BANG OUT OF!"



**COME AND GET IT, YOU FILTHY  
FASCISTS!**



**"LATER--"**

YOU  
DID  
IT.  
LANCE--  
AND  
NOT A  
SINGLE  
NAZI  
ESCAPED!

YES, AND THE BERBERS WILL  
NEVER FALL FOR ANTI-DEMOCRATIC  
PROPAGANDA AGAIN! WHAT'S MORE,  
THE LOOT IN THE NAZI STRONG-  
HOLD WILL HELP THEM TO A  
BETTER LIFE -- SO THEY WON'T  
BE MISLED BY FASCIST  
LEADERS IN THE FUTURE! THEY'LL THINK EL HAFSID  
PERISHED IN THE FIGHT! WHEN THEY NEVER SEE  
HIM AGAIN -- AND THEY'LL  
SOON FORGET HIM!

BUT I WILL NEVER  
FORGET **YOU**, LANCE --  
YOU WILL LIVE IN MY  
MIND AND HEART  
FOREVER!

LANCE LARSON SLUGS HIS  
WAY THROUGH TREMENDOUS  
ODDS IN THE NEXT  
SPINE-TINGLING ISSUE!  
**DON'T MISS IT!**

The  
END



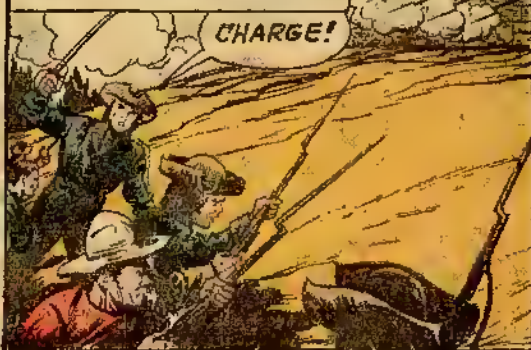
# PATRIOT SPY

IN THE EARLY DAYS OF THE AMERICAN REVOLUTION, A YOUNG SCHOOL TEACHER IN NEW LONDON, CONNECTICUT, FOUND HIMSELF STRONGLY STIRRED BY THE SIGHT OF HIS COUNTRYMEN RALLYING TO THE BATTLE FOR INDEPENDENCE!

CAN I TEACH MY PUPILS ABOUT LIBERTY... IF I AM UNWILLING TO FIGHT FOR IT MYSELF? I HAVE A DUTY TO STAY HERE AS A TEACHER... BUT A GREATER DUTY AS A PATRIOT!



SO IT WAS THAT NATHAN HALE ENLISTED IN THE AMERICAN REVOLUTIONARY ARMY! HE ROSE RAPIDLY TO THE RANK OF CAPTAIN... AND PLAYED A VITAL PART IN DRIVING THE TORIES FROM BOSTON!



WITH BOSTON SECURED, CAPT. HALE ASKED TO BE SENT TO NEW YORK, WHICH WAS BEING BESIEGED BY THE BRITISH! PERMISSION WAS GRANTED... BUT THE YOUNG PATRIOT FOUND THE CITY ON STARVATION RATIONS, WITH ITS INHABITANTS HUNGRILY EYING A TORY SLOOP WHICH THEY KNEW TO BE FILLED WITH RATIONS FOR THE BESIEGING NAVY!

JUST THINK... THERE'S WHEAT AND MEAT AND SUGAR FOR THE WHOLE CITY IN THAT SLOOP! BUT WE DON'T DARE TRY TO RAID IT WHILE SHE'S UNDER THE GUNS OF THAT BRITISH MAN-OF-WAR!

RAID IT? WHY NOT STEAL THE SLOOP COMPLETELY?



GENERAL HEATH, GIVE ME A FEW PICKED VOLUNTEERS... AND I'LL STEAL THAT FOOD SHIP RIGHT OUT FROM UNDER THE WARSHIP'S GUNS!

IT'S A FOOL-HARDY STUNT, CAPTAIN HALE... BUT OUR DESPERATE CONDITION REQUIRES DESPERATE ACTION! GOOD LUCK!



CAPTAIN HALE WAITED FOR A RAINY NIGHT... AND WITH A DOZEN MEN, HE HEADED OUT FOR THE FOOD SHIP ANCHORED IN THE CENTER OF THE RIVER!

WHATEVER YOU DO, DON'T LET OUR ROWBOAT BUMP AGAINST THE SIDE OF THE SLOOP... OR THE CREW BE AROUSED AND WE'LL BE LOST!



THEN, IN THE WIND-SWEPT DARKNESS...







ON BOARD THE FOOD SHIP... DON'T MAKE A SOUND, AND WE'LL MERELY TIE AND GAG YOU! OTHERWISE... **YOU DIE!**

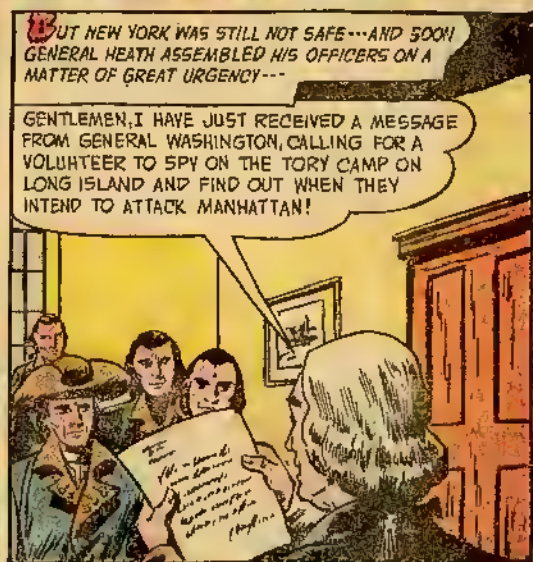


HURRY... BATTEN DOWN THOSE HATCHES! THE REST OF THE CREW MUST BE ASLEEP... THEY WON'T EVEN KNOW THEY'RE **PRISONERS!**



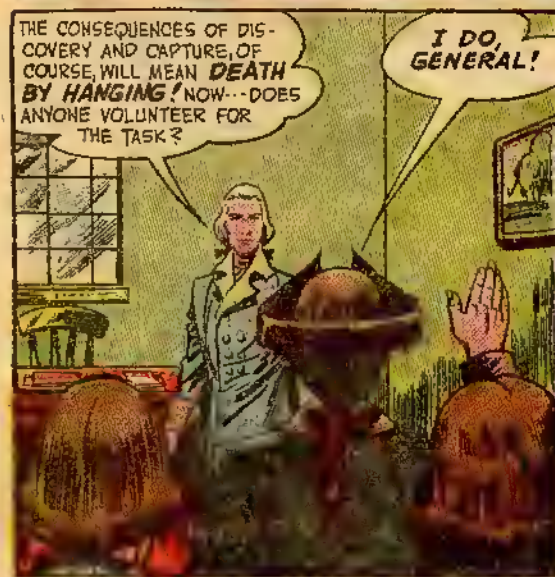
**HURRAH FOR CAP'T HALE!**

WITH HALE'S MEN IN COMMAND OF THE SLOOP, IT WAS SIMPLE TO RAISE ANCHOR AND HEAD FOR A WHARF WHERE HUNGRY REVOLUTIONARIES WERE IMPATIENTLY WAITING!



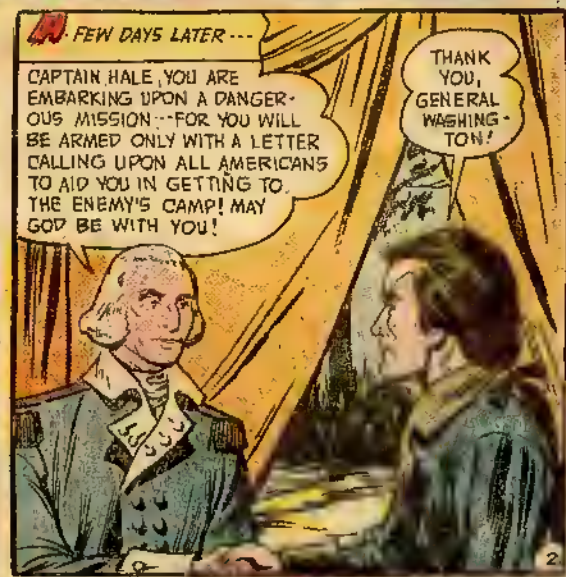
BUT NEW YORK WAS STILL NOT SAFE... AND SOON GENERAL HEATH ASSEMBLED HIS OFFICERS ON A MATTER OF GREAT URGENCY...

GENTLEMEN, I HAVE JUST RECEIVED A MESSAGE FROM GENERAL WASHINGTON, CALLING FOR A VOLUNTEER TO SPY ON THE TORY CAMP ON LONG ISLAND AND FIND OUT WHEN THEY INTEND TO ATTACK MANHATTAN!



**I DO, GENERAL!**

THE CONSEQUENCES OF DISCOVERY AND CAPTURE, OF COURSE, WILL MEAN **DEATH BY HANGING!** NOW... DOES ANYONE VOLUNTEER FOR THE TASK?



THANK YOU, GENERAL WASHINGTON!

FEW DAYS LATER...

CAPTAIN HALE, YOU ARE EMBARKING UPON A DANGEROUS MISSION... FOR YOU WILL BE ARMED ONLY WITH A LETTER CALLING UPON ALL AMERICANS TO AID YOU IN GETTING TO THE ENEMY'S CAMP! MAY GOD BE WITH YOU!



HALE WAS ROWED ACROSS LONG ISLAND SOUND FROM CONNECTICUT TO HUNTINGTON BAY--AND THEN PROCEEDED ON FOOT TO THE BRITISH CAMP!

HALT-- STATE YOUR BUSINESS HERE!

I AM MERELY A POOR SCHOOLMASTER WHO HAS SWORN ALLEGIANCE TO KING GEORGE --AND WHEN I REFUSED TO JOIN THE REVOLUTIONARY CAUSE, THE REBELS PERSECUTED ME UNTIL I HAD TO FLEE! I SEEK SANCTUARY BEHIND THE BRITISH LINES!

HALE'S SCHOLARLY, HONEST APPEARANCE STOOD HIM IN GOOD STEAD, FOR NO ONE SEEMED TO DOUBT HIS STORY! AND SO HE WAS ABLE TO WANDER ALL THROUGH THE BRITISH CAMPS, GAINING VITAL INFORMATION!

HMM, THIS MAKES THE THIRD REGIMENT I'VE SEEN HEADING WEST-- THE ATTACK ON NEW YORK MUST BE IMMINENT!

EACH NIGHT IN HIS ROOM AT AN INN, THE SCHOOLMASTER-SPY WROTE DOWN IN LATIN ALL THE INFORMATION HE HAD GAINED --AND THEN PLACED THE NOTES IN HIS SHOE UNDER A REMOVABLE SOLE! FINALLY--

I'VE GOT ENOUGH NOW TO GIVE WASHINGTON AN EXCELLENT PICTURE OF THE BRITISH STRENGTH AND PLANS-- TOMORROW MORNING, I'LL START FOR HOME!

BUT AT SUPPER THAT NIGHT AT THE INN, "THE CEDARS"--

GREAT SCOTT--THAT'S A DISTANT COUSIN OF MINE--ONE WHO JOINED THE TORIES! HE--HE RECOGNIZES ME --AND HE KNOWS I JOINED THE REVOLUTIONISTS!

THE MAN HURRIED OUT--AND HALE SPENT A RESTLESS, TROUBLED NIGHT! THE NEXT MORNING, AS HE APPROACHED THE RENDEZVOUS WHERE THE REVOLUTIONISTS' BOAT WAS TO PICK HIM UP--

HALT-- YOU'RE UNDER ARREST AS A SPY!

HALE WAS THOROUGHLY SEARCHED, HIS BOOTS RIPPED APART--AND HIS NOTES DISCOVERED! THE YOUNG PATRIOT WAS SPEEDILY TRIED AS A SPY AND CONDEMNED TO DEATH AND IT WAS THEN THAT HE MADE HIS FAMOUS STATEMENT THAT WILL ENDURE AS LONG AS MEN CHERISH LIBERTY!

NATHAN HALE, DO YOU HAVE ANY LAST STATEMENT TO MAKE?

YES-- I ONLY REGRET THAT I HAVE BUT ONE LIFE TO GIVE FOR MY COUNTRY!



# LANCE *and the* ANTS

**F**ROM MY HIDING place in the thick jungle shrubbery, I looked down upon the hidden valley deep in the heart of Central America ... and my eyes widened at what I saw. "This is the place, all right," I muttered to myself, "or my name's not Lance Larson!"

There below me was the most perfectly camouflaged airfield I had ever seen...and I've seen plenty, brother, from Guadalcanal to Vladivostok. From my spot on the low hill overlooking the valley, I could count at least eight heavy bombers and dozens of barracks buildings...but above it all, from hillside to hillside, stretched an enormous camouflage net that completely covered the valley, effectively concealing the field from aerial observation. No wonder the agents of the Latin American republic that had hired me hadn't been able to spot the field despite their painstaking aerial photographs!

But their intelligence reports had definitely indicated that such a field existed. It was almost common knowledge that Gen. Juan Villegas, the would-be Latin American dictator, had delivered an ultimatum to the republic's government, threatening to bomb the capital unless the administration yielded to his rebellion and accepted him as dictator of the country. And in the inner governmental circles, it was known that Villegas could carry out his threat...for evidence indicated that he had been supplied with planes and bombs by a totalitarian Red government that was anxious to secure a foothold in Central America.

As soon as the rebel's ultimatum had been received, I had been called in to try to find the field and stop the attack...because they said I was the only one-man-army in the world who could do the job in time.

But although I had found the field, even I began to wonder whether I could stop the bombers below me from taking off. The ultimatum deadline was only hours away, and already engines were being warmed up and green-uniformed men were beginning to wheel huge bombs up to the waiting planes.

Desperately, I thought of rushing down there and blasting away with my tommy-gun until I could get close enough to explode the bombs and send the whole place to kingdom come...but I knew it would be sheer suicide. True, I'd faced odds of a thousand to one many times before...but a one-man-army is a one-man-fool if he doesn't try to even those odds a bit by the use of his wits.

But what in blazes could I do? I had no green uniform, so I couldn't disguise myself as one of the rebel troopers below. I probably could blast my way close enough to fire at those bombs, but I wanted to come out of this *alive*...the small fortune the Latin American government was paying me for the job would be no use to a *dead* soldier of fortune!

Then, while I was wracking my brain trying to think of any angle, I heard a high, whirring sound behind me. I turned...and gasped. Coming towards me was a five yard wide column of *Doryllinae*, otherwise known as the blind driver or legionary ants, the terrors of the jungle. There were literally millions upon millions coming my way, and billions more were probably behind them...for these dread scavengers were known to travel in columns ten to fifteen miles long. The whirring sound? That came from those millions of jaws working away at the vegetation in their path...jaws that could devour a human to the bone within minutes.



Believe me, I got out of their path in a hurry. There was no danger in standing a few feet away from their marching column, because I knew the driver ants always traveled in a straight, relentless, invincible line. Wait...a straight line...would that line take them into the airfield below?

Eagerly, I looked down...and cursed silently. In their present course, the driver ants would miss the airfield by about fifty yards. And there was nothing in the world that could divert that immense horde, for they would swarm over any obstacle placed in their path.

But while I stood there watching, trying to think of some way of turning them towards the green-clad men below, I suddenly became aware that the irrevocable tide had swept past me, and was now between me and the field. One quick look told me that they were now devouring a heavy thorn thicker, so it was impossible for me to run ahead of their marching column and cut in front of them...because the thicker was impassable. Nor could I take a chance on leaping over that fifteen foot wide river of death...for if my foot ever landed in their midst, thousands of them would be swarming over me in a second, stinging me into paralysis...with inevitable death soon to follow!

Now I really *was* desperate...I had to get over that swarming multitude if I was ever going to prevent those bombers from taking off. And there was only one thing I knew of that would allow me to wade safely through that column of scavengers, only one thing in the world that could repel driver ants...a mash of the *almara* plant.

Hastily, I bear back up the hill, away from the drivers, searching for the tell-tale brownish-yellow stalks of the *almara* plant. And I was in luck, for I found a cluster of them some thirty yards up the hill.

Swiftly, I pulled up a handful, and began cutting up the roots into my mess tin. When I had enough, I spilled some water from my canteen into the tin, and rubbed the re-

sulting mixture over my boots, as high as the knee.

Then, just as I was about to fling the rest of the mash away, I had my great idea. First I strode up to the column of drivers, stepped right into their midst...and grinned as I saw those nearest my feet halt and swerve away in panic, their antennae waving furiously. Then, having proven the efficacy of the *almara* mas, I began pouring a stream of paste into their midst, forcing the ants to divide and redivide again and again...until there were finally dozens and dozens of separate columns heading straight down towards the airfield.

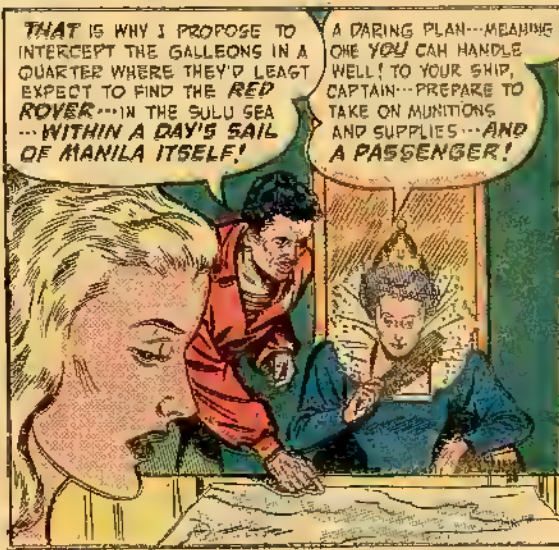
I began hearing the first screams about an hour later. I knew that literally hundreds of millions of drivers were overrunning the camp by now, with more billions behind them...but I waited until the screams mounted to a crescendo of terror and pain before I began striding down the hill, right in the midst of the legions of ants.

Occasionally, I found myself stepping over human skeletons encased in green uniforms...but in the distance I saw the remaining troops fleeing in blind terror into the jungle, ahead of the hordes of ants. Then I was at the planes, and I recognized General Juan Villegas himself standing on the wing of a bomber and wildly shouting for his men to return, swearing that he would make them all rich with plunder from the capital if they didn't desert him now.

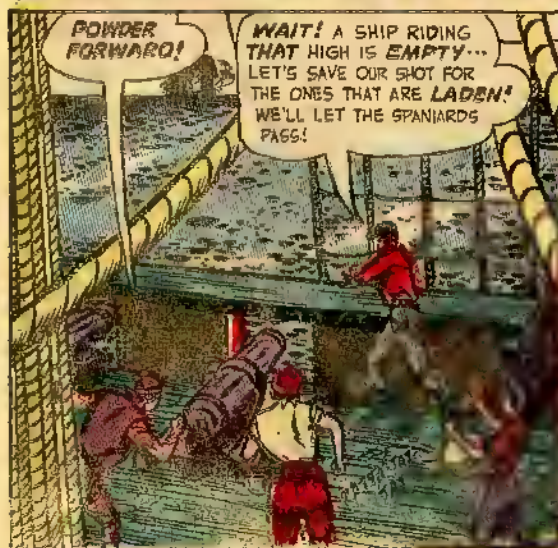
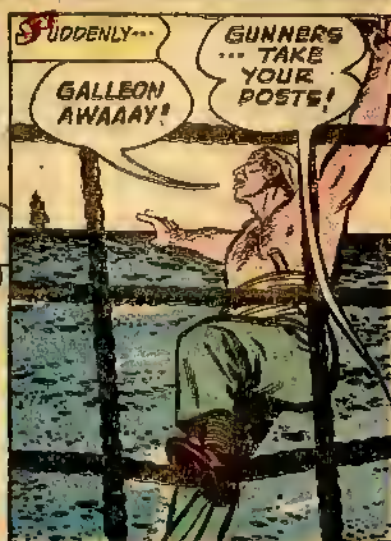
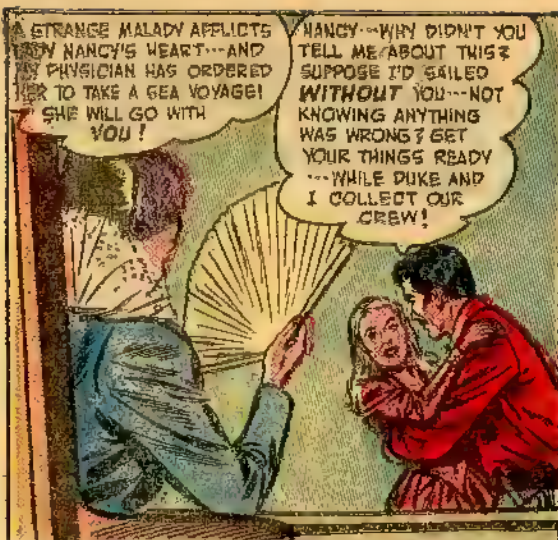
A single burst from my Tommy gun...and the would-be dictator toppled from the wing right into the path of one of the ravenous columns of ants. Then I busied myself among the racks of bombs, finding one that had a delayed-action time fuse. Ten minutes later, I had rewired the fuse to explode in half an hour...and a half hour later, I was on top of the hill, watching the whole hidden valley erupt in a fiery explosion that would serve as a lesson to all future would-be dictators.

Yup, just as I said, you can equalize any odds if you just use your wits.











**A**S CROSSBONES TRAINS THE SPYGLASS...



THEY'VE GOT A **GIRL** ABOARD, DUKE... A **CAPTIVE!** SHE'S THE ONE WHO OPENED FIRE... TO ATTRACT OUR ATTENTION!

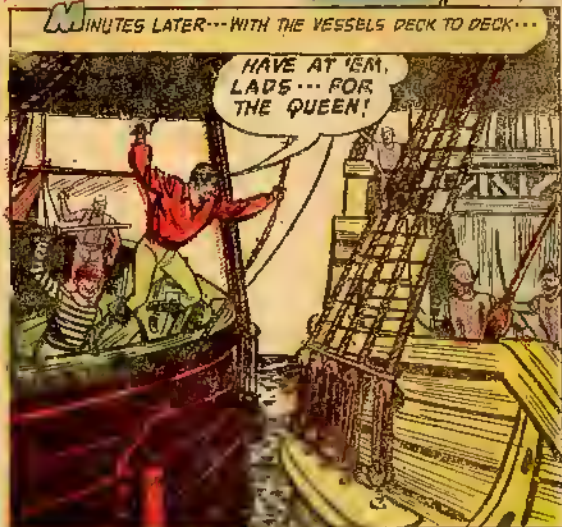
LET'S BOARD 'EM, MATE... AND SEE WHAT IT'S ALL ABOUT! PEPPER THEIR SAILS, HEARTIES... UNTIL THEY HEAVE TO!



**M**INUTES LATER... WITH THE VESSELS DECK TO DECK...



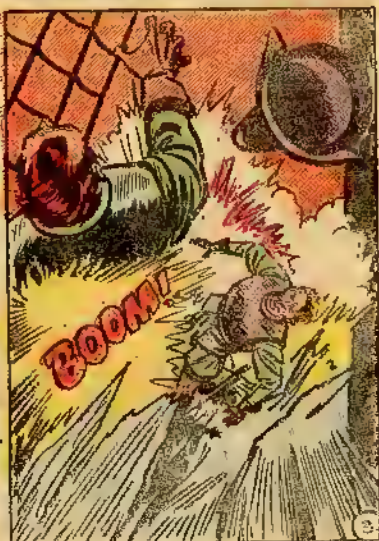
HAVE AT 'EM, LADS... FOR THE QUEEN!



THAT SWAB'S LOADED WITH GRENADES! OUR SWORDS AND PIKES WILL BE USELESS... ONCE **THOSE** MURDEROUS THINGS LAND AMONG US!



I'LL TRADE MY BEST BLADE, SPANIARD... FOR **THOSE!**





AS THE DEMORALIZED SPANIARDS THROW DOWN THEIR WEAPONS...

I AM THEETA... PRINCESS OF SULU! WHAT WAY CAN I SHOW MY THANKS... OTHER THAN THIS?

THE BAGGAGE... SHE'S CERTAINLY WASTING NO TIME!



NAKEMO, ONE OF MY DISLOYAL CHIEFS, TOLD THE SPANIARDS I WAS SAILING TO THE SOUTH OF LUZON! THEY OVERHAULED THE ROYAL CANOE---KILLED MY GUARDS---AND TOOK ME TO MANILA! THE SCHEMING VICEROY, AMARGO, REALIZED HE COULD FORCE MY PEOPLE TO REMAIN PEACEFUL---AND SUPPLY THE SPANIARDS WITH PEARLS AND SPICES...**BY SENDING ME TO SPAIN AS A HOSTAGE!**



WHAT'LL WE DO WITH THESE JACKANAPES, CROSSBONES? WE'VE GOT CLOSE TO TWO HUNDRED OF 'EM---MUCH MORE THAN THE **RED ROVER** CAN CARRY!

A DAY'S WORK ON THE RIGGING...AND THE GALLEON WILL BE SHIP-SHAPE...READY TO SEND TO ENGLAND WITH A PRIZE CREW! WE'LL TOW HER TO A QUIET COVE, DUKE---AND PUT THESE PAMPERED DANDIES TO WORK!



THE FOLLOWING NIGHT...WHILE THE SPANIARDS REPAIR THE GALLEON UNDER GUARD...

DUKE...HAVE YOU SEEN ANY SIGN OF NANCY?

SHE'S PROBABLY SULKING BELOW DECK, MATE---AND I CAN'T SAY I BLAME HER! EVERY TIME THEETA LOOKS AT YOU---IT'S WITH EYES LIKE TWIN VOLCANOES!



AT THAT MOMENT...IN THEETA'S CABIN...

CROSSBONES WOULD LAUGH AT ME IF I SHOWED THE SLIGHTEST JEALOUSY---BUT NOW THAT I'M SURE THEETA WENT ASHORE---MAYBE I CAN **PROVE** IT ISN'T JUST MY IMAGINATION!



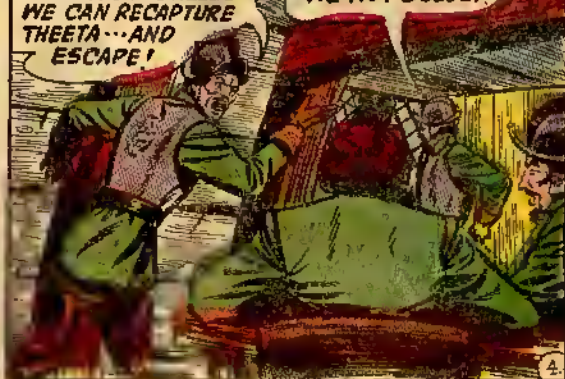
THIS DYE I FOUND AMONG THEETA'S THINGS WILL DARKEN MY SKIN! NOW...I'M READY TO **SEE** HOW MUCH CROSSBONES IS SMITTEN WITH THAT ISLAND MIX!



MEANWHILE...IN THE QUARTERS OCCUPIED BY THE SPANISH OFFICERS...

CROSSBONES' RESCUE OF THEETA WILL MAKE POWERFUL ALLIES FOR THE ENGLISH---UNLESS WE CAN RECAPTURE THEETA...AND **ESCAPE!**

THERE'S A FAST NATIVE SAILING CRAFT MOORED NEAR THE BEACH! IT CAN BE DONE...**IF WE ACT BOLDLY!**





**AS** THE GUARD MAKES HIS  
ROUNDS---

**NOW TO  
FIND  
THEETA!**



**MINUTES LATER---**

**HAUL! PUT  
SOME BEEF  
INTO IT, MY  
DAINTY  
DONG!**

**CROSSBONES  
...THEY'VE  
GIVEN US  
THE SLIP!  
SIX OF 'EM  
...WITH  
THEETA!**



**DO I HEAR MY  
NAME? I HAVE  
JUST COME  
FROM MY CABIN  
---AND FIND  
ONE OF MY  
COSTUMES  
MISSING!**

**YE GODS, DUKE---  
THERE'S ONLY ONE  
OTHER WOMAN  
THEY COULD HAVE  
MADE OFF WITH!  
NANCY MUST HAVE  
DISGUISED HER-  
SELF FOR SOME  
REASON---AND  
THE SCURVY DOGS  
MISTOOK HER FOR  
THEETA!**



**THE RED ROVER CAN'T OUTGAIL  
THAT PROA---BUT I'D RATHER  
RISK NANCY'S LIFE THAN LEAVE  
HER IN THE HANDS OF THOSE  
CUTTHROATS!**

**NO USE, MATE---  
IT'S TOO DARK  
FOR AN EFFECTIVE  
VOLLEY!**



**AS** THE SHOT ROARS ACROSS THE LAGOON---

**THEY'VE FOUND OUT---AND  
I CAN PICTURE CROSS-  
BONES' RAGE---NOW  
THAT IT'S TOO LATE  
TO STOP US!**

**I'VE GOT MYSELF IN A  
TERRIBLE SITUATION! UNLESS  
I CAN KEEP THEM THINKING  
I'M THEETA---I'LL BE RUTH-  
LESSLY KILLED WHEN THEY  
LEARN MY TRUE IDENTITY---  
AN INTIMATE OF QUEEN  
ELIZABETH AND THE  
HATED CAPTAIN CROSS-  
BONES!**



**ABOARD THE RED ROVER---**

**ALL HANDS  
---STIR YOUR  
STUMPS! WE'RE  
GETTING UNDER,  
WAY!**

**EASY, ME BUCKO! IF WE  
HAVE TO ATTACK MANILA  
TO SAVE NANCY, I'M WITH  
YOU---AND A POX ON THE  
STRONGEST GARRISON IN  
THE INDIES! BUT UNLESS  
WE PLAN---THEY'LL  
HAVE OUR THROATS!**



**AY, I'LL PLAN---WITH  
GUNS AND SWORDS  
AND MY OWN TWO  
FISTS! AVAST---LET  
THAT BE THE END  
OF IT!**

**LISTEN A BIT! WITHIN A FEW  
HOURS AFTER DAWN, WE CAN  
TAKE THEETA TO HER CAPITAL,  
BARAGON---A FEW MILES  
INLAND---AND LEAVE THE  
PRISONERS THERE! THAT  
WAY---A FULL FIFTY MEN  
WE'RE NOW USING AS  
GUARDS CAN BE FREE  
FOR FIGHTING!**

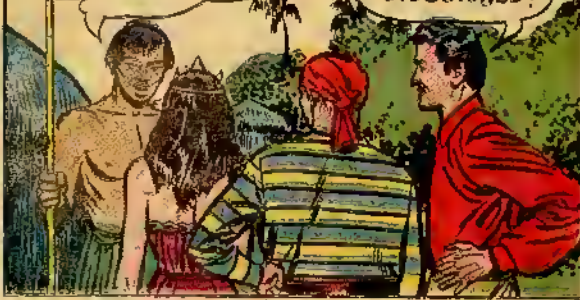




**NEXT MORNING...WITH THEETA'S WARRIORS  
GUARDING THE SPANIARDS...**

THEETA...YOUR BETRAYER, NAKEMO, HAS  
ESCAPED...RIGHT AFTER WE HEARD  
THE NEWS THAT YOU WERE ABOARD  
ONE OF THE BIG SHIPS ANCHORED  
IN THE LAGOON! WE PURSUED  
HIM TO THE BEACH...BUT HE  
FLED NORTH IN A SPEED  
BOAT!

**TO MANILA!**  
THAT TRAITOR WILL  
REPORT WE'VE RESCUED  
THEETA...AND THAT  
MEANS NANCY WILL  
BE KILLED THE  
MINUTE THE SPANIARDS  
REALIZE SHE'S  
**DISGUISED!**



CROSSBONES...I HAVE A FLEET  
OF SWIFT WAR CANOES...TWO  
HUNDRED OF THE FIERCEST  
FIGHTERS IN THE PHILIPPINES!  
WITHOUT THEM...YOU WILL BE  
FACING TERRIBLE ODDS!

NO, THEETA...  
**ONE VESSEL CAN  
COUNT ON THE  
ELEMENT OF SUR-  
PRISE...AND  
THAT'S OUR  
ONLY CHANCE  
AGAINST THE POWER-  
FUL GARRISON! I  
MUST BE OFF...**

SO I GUESS  
THIS IS  
GOOD-  
BYE!



**JUST BEFORE DAWN THE NEXT DAY...  
IN MANILA'S OUTER BAY...**

TWO GALLEONS...  
HEAVY LADEN! AY  
...IT'S HARD TO  
WATCH 'EM SLIP  
PAST US, MATES  
...UNCHALLENGED!

AND WHY?  
**BOOTY'S WHAT  
WE SAILED FER...  
BUT WE'VE GOT  
TER RISK OUR  
NECKS TER  
SAVE LADY  
NANCY!**



**YOU WHINING OUR  
...DO YOU PUT  
PLUNDER ABOVE  
HER LIFE?**



BELAY, CROSSBONES  
...WE'RE READY  
TO FIGHT!

I'LL MAKE A  
BARGAIN...WITH  
ALL OF YOU! IN  
EXCHANGE FOR THE  
LOOT YOU'VE MISSED  
YOU CAN KEEP YOUR  
WORTHLESS NECKS...  
**I'LL RESCUE  
NANCY  
ALONE!**

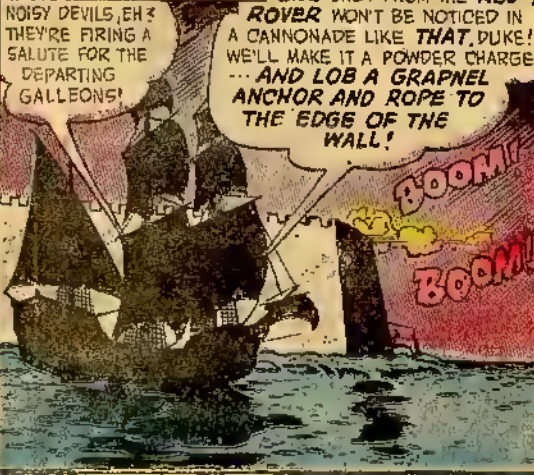


**AS THE RED ROVER EDGES CLOSER TO THE FORT...  
UNNOTICED IN THE DARKNESS...**

NOISY DEVILS, EH?  
THEY'RE FIRING A  
SALUTE FOR THE  
DEPARTING  
GALLEONS!

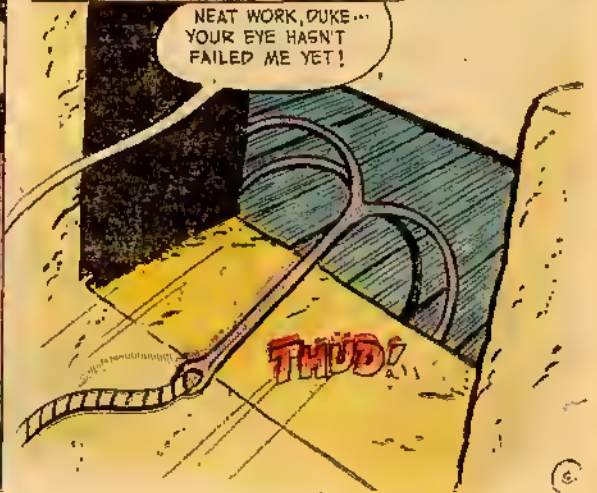
**ONE SHOT FROM THE RED  
ROVER WON'T BE NOTICED IN  
A CANNONADE LIKE THAT, DUKE!  
WE'LL MAKE IT A POWER CHARGE  
...AND LOB A GRAPNEL  
ANCHOR AND ROPE TO  
THE EDGE OF THE  
WALL!**

**BOOM!**  
**BOOM!**

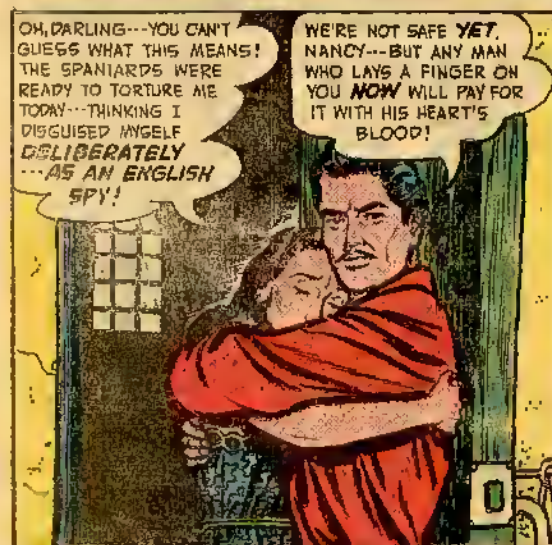
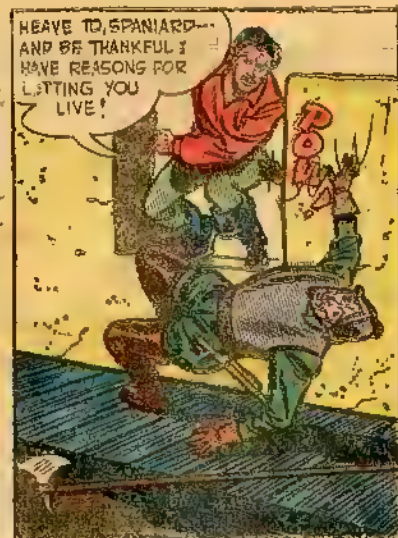


**THEY...WITH DUKE AIMING THE PIECE...**

NEAT WORK, DUKE...  
YOUR EYE HASN'T  
FAILED ME YET!









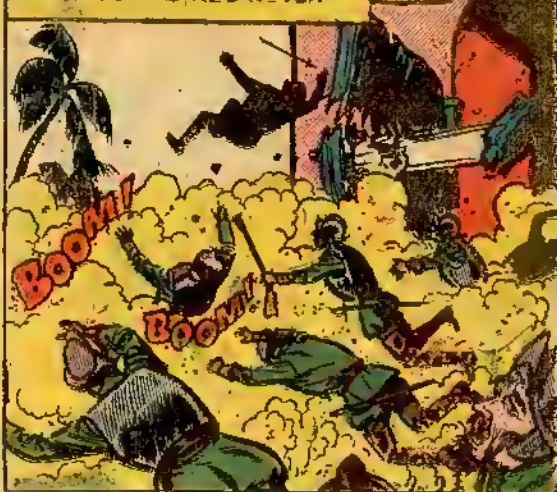
**AS CROSSBONES AND NANCY RUSH THROUGH THE GATE...**

GOOD HEAVENS...WE'RE TRAPPED! THERE'S A SQUAD OF SOLDIERS RUSHING AFTER US FROM THE FORT...AND THE VICEROY'S BARGE IS LANDING JUST AHEAD OF US...WITH AN ARMED CREW!

WE'D BETTER GET TO ONE SIDE! DUKE'S RUN UP A RED PENNANT...OUR OLD SIGNAL FOR A BROAD-SIDE!



**A MOMENT LATER...AS A ROARING BARRAGE BREAKS FROM THE RED ROVER...**



Then...

BACK, VARLET! WHEN I COME ABOARD THIS TUB...MY BUSINESS IS WITH THE VICEROY!

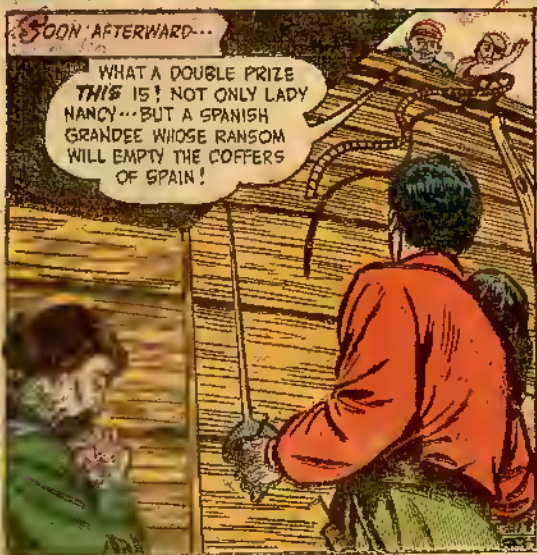


TAKE YOUR CHOICE! UNLESS YOU WANT TO SEE HIS EXCELLENCY SPITTED BY TWO FEET OF STEEL, YOU'LL BEND TO YOUR KNEES...AND MAKE FOR THE RED ROVER!



**SOON AFTERWARD...**

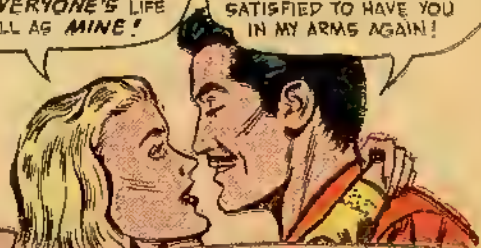
WHAT A DOUBLE PRIZE THIS IS! NOT ONLY LADY NANCY...BUT A SPANISH GRANDEE WHOSE RANSOM WILL EMPTY THE COFFERS OF SPAIN!



**AS THE RED ROVER SPEEDS OUT OF RANGE OF THE SPANISH GUNS...**

DARLING...WILL YOU FORGIVE ME FOR HAVING BEEN JEALOUS? I DIDN'T REALIZE WHAT IT WOULD MEAN...ENDANGERING YOUR SHIP...AND RISKING EVERYONE'S LIFE AS WELL AS MINE!

NOW THAT YOU'RE SAFE, NANCY...THERE'S NOTHING TO REGRET! THE CREW WILL SHARE THE GOLD WE COLLECT FOR THE VICEROY...AND AS FOR ME...I'M SATISFIED TO HAVE YOU IN MY ARMS AGAIN!



**WATCH FOR THE RUMBLE OF DECK GUNS AND THE FLASH OF FIGHTING STEEL...WHEN CAPTAIN CROSSBONES SQUARES OFF AGAINST NEW FOES...IN THE NEXT ISSUE!**